

USA Volleyball

OFFICIAL VOLLEYBALL RULES

2003-2004

GAME CHARACTERISTICS

Volleyball is a team sport played by two teams on a playing court divided by a net. The object of the game is for each team to send the ball regularly over the net to ground it on the opponent's court, and to prevent the ball from being grounded on its own court. The ball is put into play by the right back-row player who serves the ball by hitting it over the net into the opponent's court. A team is allowed to hit the ball three times (in addition to the block contact) to return it to the opponent's court. A player is not allowed to hit the ball twice consecutively, except when attempting a block. The rally continues until the ball touches the ground/floor, goes "out" or a team fails to return it to the opponent's court or commits a fault. In volleyball, the team winning the rally scores a point. When the receiving team wins a rally, it gains a point and the right to serve and its players rotate one position clockwise. Rotation ensures that players play both at the net and in the back zone of the court.

A team wins a game by scoring 25 points with a two-point advantage in non-deciding games and 15 points with a two-point advantage in the deciding game. A team wins the match by winning the best of three or five games. In all games there is no point cap.

SECTION I - THE GAME

CHAPTER ONE

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

1. PLAYING AREA

The playing area includes the playing court and the free zone [Diagram 1]. The playing space includes the playing area and the space (expanse) above it.

1.1 DIMENSIONS

1.1.1 The playing court measures 18 m x 9 m (59' x 29'6") and is divided by the axis of the centerline into two team courts. The free zone surrounds the court with a recommended minimum width of 2 m (6'6"). The playing space is free from any obstructions to a recommended height of 7 m (23') from the playing surface [Diagram 2].

1.2 PLAYING SURFACE

- 1.2.1 The surface must be flat, horizontal and uniform.
- 1.2.2 The playing surface must not present any danger of injury to the players.
- 1.2.3 **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition**, the surface must be approved by USA Volleyball.

1.3 LINES ON THE COURT

- 1.3.1 All lines are 5 cm (2") wide. They must be of a contrasting color from the floor and any other lines.
- 1.3.2 **Boundary Lines:** Two sidelines and two end lines mark the playing court. All boundary lines are drawn inside the dimensions of the playing court.

- 1.3.3 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.
- 1.3.4 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.
- 1.3.4.1 **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition**, the extensions of the attack lines outside the court shall be marked with five 15 cm (6") lines spaced 20 cm (8") apart to a total length of 1.75 m (70"). (These markings are optional for all other events.)

1.4 ZONES AND AREAS OF THE PLAYING COURT

- 1.4.1 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.
- 1.4.2 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, each 15 cm (6") long, drawn 20 cm (8") behind and perpendicular to the end line, 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. For developmental purposes, for 12-and-under competition, the furthest edge of the service line is drawn at 7 m (23') from the axis of the center line. The 9 m (29'6") service line will be used at the USA Volleyball Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships.

- 1.4.2 *Commentary: The service zone shall have a minimum depth of 2 m (6'6"). If this zone is less than 2 m (6'6") [Rule 1.4.2], a line shall be marked on the court to provide the minimum depth. After the service, the line is ignored and becomes part of the court.*
- 1.4.3 Substitution Zone: The substitution zone is the area between the imaginary extension of both attack lines to the scorekeeper's table.
- 1.4.4 Warm-Up Area: The warm-up area is 3 m x 3 m (9'10" x 9'10") in size and is located beyond each team's bench, no closer to the playing court than the team bench, whether outside or within the free zone.

1.5 TEMPERATURE

The minimum temperature shall be 10⁰ C (50⁰ F).

1.6 LIGHTING

For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition, the lighting on the playing area should be 300 lux (27.9 foot candles) measured at 1 m (39") above the playing surface.

1.7 SCOREBOARD

The scoreboard must be divided into two parts with numbers that provide the score for each team. The score displayed on the scoreboard is not official and may not be used as a basis of protest.

2. NET AND POSTS

2.1 NET

The net is 1 m (39") wide and at least 9.5 m (31'2") long, placed vertically over the axis of the center line. It is made

of 10 cm (4") square black mesh. At its top is a horizontal band, 5 cm (2") wide, made of an appropriate stabilizing material and sewn along its full length. 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 [Diagram 3a].

2.2 SIDE BANDS

Two white bands, 5 cm (2") wide and 1 m (39") long, if used, are fastened vertically to the net and placed perpendicular to each sideline. They are considered to be part of the net.

2.3 ANTENNAS

An antenna is a flexible rod, 1.8 m (5'11") long and 10 mm (3/8") in diameter made of fiberglass or similar material. An antenna is fastened at the outer edge of each side band and placed on opposite ends of the net [Diagram 3b]. The top 80 cm (32") of each antenna extends above the net and is marked with 10 cm (4") stripes of contrasting colors, preferably red and white. The antennas are considered part of the net [Diagram 5].

2.4 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. The net height is measured from the center of the playing court with a measuring device. The two ends of the net (over the sidelines) must both be at the same height from the playing surface and must not exceed the official height by more than 2 cm (3/4").

2.4 *Commentary: The height of the net may vary for specific age groups as follows (see page 6):*

AGE GROUPS	FEMALES/REVERSE CO-ED	MALE/CO-ED
55 years and above		2.38 m (7'9 5/8")
45 years and above	2.19 m (7'2 1/8")	
17/18 years and under	2.24 m (7'4 1/8")	2.43 m (7'11 5/8")
15/16 years and under	2.24 m (7'4 1/8")	2.43 m (7'11 5/8")
13/14 years and under	2.24 m (7'4 1/8")	2.24 m (7'4 1/8")
11/12 years and under	2.13 m (7'0")	2.13 m (7'0")
10 years and under	1.98 m (6'6")	2.13 m (7'0")

2.5 POSTS

It is recommended that posts be fixed to the playing surface or the ceiling at a distance of 1 m (39") from each sideline. Posts supporting the net must be rounded, smooth and preferably adjustable.

2.6 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

All additional equipment is determined by USA Volleyball regulations.

- 2.6.1 The antenna fastening apparatus must be smooth-surfaced and free of any sharp edges.
- 2.6.2 If the posts are secured by means of wires, barrels or other supporting apparatus, there must be some means of clearly identifying the wires, barrels or supporting apparatus. All other dangerous or obstructing devices must be eliminated.
- 2.6.2 *Commentary: All wires that support posts from the floor will be eliminated, or if that is not possible, then all exposed wires must be padded with at least 1.25 cm (1/2") thick, resilient, shock absorbing material throughout the entire length. The padding must be clearly recognizable.*
- 2.6.3 Posts shall be padded to a minimum height of 1.7 m (5'6") with at least 1.25 cm (1/2") thick, resilient, shock absorbing material.
- 2.6.4 The front and sides of the referee's platform must be padded in the same manner as the posts [Rule 2.6.3].

3. BALL

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS

3.1 *Commentary: The host of the event shall supply an accurate pressure measuring device.*

3.1.1 The ball shall be spherical, made of a flexible leather or leather-like case with an interior bladder made of rubber or a similar material. It shall be uniform and light in color or a combination of colors, one of which must be light.

Circumference: 65 to 67 cm (25.5" to 27")

Weight: 260 to 280 grams (9 to 10 ounces)

Inside pressure: 0.30 to 0.325 kg/cm² (4.3 to 4.6 lbs./sq. inch)

3.1.2 **Twelve-and-under competition at the USAV Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships** will be conducted using a ball with the same circumference and inside pressure as listed in Rule 3.1.1 above, but with a weight of 198 to 227 grams (7 to 8 ounces).

3.2 UNIFORMITY OF BALLS

All balls used in a match must have the same characteristics regarding color, circumference, weight, inside pressure and manufacturer. Balls used for **nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition** must be approved by USA Volleyball.

3.3 THREE-BALL SYSTEM

For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition, the three-ball system is recommended. In this case, six ball retrievers are stationed, one at each corner of the free zone and one behind each referee [Diagram 10].

CHAPTER TWO

PARTICIPANTS

4. TEAMS

4.1 COMPOSITION

- 4.1.1 A team consists of players, a head coach, assistant coach(es), trainer(s), manager(s) and others identified on the team roster. Only identified team members may sit on the bench.
- 4.1.1 *Commentary: Players are the team members on the team court. Substitutes are team members in uniform who are not in the starting line-up of a game. Players who are on the same team are teammates.*
- 4.1.2 Should the coach have to leave his/her team, an assistant coach may, with the authorization of the first referee, assume the coach's functions.
- 4.1.3 Only the team members recorded on the roster may participate in the match.
- 4.1.3 *Commentary: At least 10 minutes before the start of each match, including tournament play, each team shall submit a roster listing the names and uniform numbers of players eligible to participate in the match. The coach or team captain must sign the roster.*
- 4.1.4 Once the coach or the team captain signs the roster, the recorded players cannot be changed.
- 4.1.4 *Commentary: A roster may be changed at any time during the match, but only to correct a uniform number. However, if the coach or game captain requests such a number change, that team will be charged with a team delay penalty. A roster may not be changed to add a player at any time after having been signed by the coach or the team captain.*

4.2 CAPTAIN

- 4.2.1 A team captain must be indicated on the roster.
- 4.2.2 It is recommended that the captain be identified with an 8 cm x 2 cm (3" x 3/4") stripe of a different color from the jersey, underlining the number on the front of the jersey.
- 4.2.3 When the team captain is not on the court, the coach or the team captain will designate another player to act as the game captain.

5. PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

5.1 EQUIPMENT

- 5.1.1 A player's uniform consists of a jersey and shorts. (Uniforms may be one piece.)
- 5.1.1 *Commentary: If undergarments, including but not limited to t-shirts, boxer shorts, tights, leotards, body suits, bicycle shorts, sports bras, etc., are worn in such a manner that they are exposed, they will be considered a part of the uniform. In that case, they must be similar and the same color for any team members who wear such a uniform.*
- 5.1.2 Uniforms must be similar, clean and of the same color (except the Libero-Rule 11.3.2.1).
- 5.1.3 Official uniform numbers:
 - 5.1.3.1 Players' jerseys must be numbered from 1 to 99.
 - 5.1.3.2 The number must be placed in the center of the back. For the front, the number must be either centered or the top of the number must be no more than 12.5 cm (5") down from the shoulder seam and the medial edge of the number be no more than 7.5 cm (3") from the midline of the jersey. Numbers must be placed

so as to be clearly visible at all times.

- 5.1.3.3 The numbers must be a different and contrasting color to the jerseys with a minimum height of 10 cm (4") on the front and 15 cm (6") on the back. Each uniform jersey must use the same color and number height for all team members (except Libero [Rule 11.3.2.1]). The stripe forming the numbers shall have a minimum width of 2 cm (3/4").
- 5.1.4 Shoes are considered player's equipment and must be light and pliable with rubber or leather soles without heels.
- 5.1.5 **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition**, uniforms must be identical with the exception of sleeve length and the Libero player (Rule 11.3.2.1).

5.2 AUTHORIZED CHANGES

- 5.2.1 The first referee may authorize one or more players to play without shoes.
- 5.2.2 The first referee may authorize one or more players to change wet jerseys between games or after substitution, provided that the color, design and number of the new jersey(s) is (are) the same and the game is not delayed.
- 5.2.3 In cold weather, the first referee may authorize the teams to play in training suits, provided these are properly numbered and of the same color and design for the whole team [Rule 5.1.2].

5.3 FORBIDDEN OBJECTS AND UNIFORMS

- 5.3.1 It is forbidden to wear hats or jewelry. An exception will be made for religious or medical medallions and, for adult competition, a flat band ring worn on the finger. If

worn, medallions shall be removed from chains and taped or sewn under the uniform. If a ring, other than a flat band, cannot be removed, it shall be taped in such a manner as not to create a safety hazard. Casts, braces, prosthetic limbs or headgear that may cause an injury or give an artificial advantage to the player must not be worn. If a cast, brace, prosthetic limb or headgear is used, padding or covering may be necessary.

- 5.3.2 Players may wear glasses or contact lenses at their own risk.
- 5.3.3 It is forbidden to wear uniforms without official numbers [Rule 5.1.3].

6. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

6.1 BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1.1 Participants must know the Official Volleyball Rules and abide by them.
- 6.1.2 Participants must accept referees' decisions with sportsmanlike conduct and without dispute. In case of doubt, clarification may be requested through the game captain.
- 6.1.3 Participants must behave respectfully and courteously in the spirit of fair play, not only toward the referees, but also toward other officials, the opponents, teammates and spectators.
- 6.1.4 Participants must refrain from actions or attitudes aimed at influencing the decisions of the referees or covering up faults committed by their team.
- 6.1.5 Participants must refrain from actions aimed at delaying the game.
- 6.1.6 Both the team captain and the coach are responsible for the conduct and discipline of their team members.
- 6.1.7 Communication between team members during the match is permitted [Rule 6.3.3].

6.2 CAPTAIN

- 6.2.1 The team captain represents the team in the coin toss at the pre-match conference.
- 6.2.2 During the match, the team captain functions as the game captain only while on the court. When the ball is out of play, the game captain may speak to the referees [Rule 6.1.2] to:
 - 6.2.2.1 Ask for an explanation of the application or interpretation of the Rules and also to submit to the appropriate referee any requests or questions of teammates. If the explanation is not satisfactory, s/he must notify the first referee, prior to the next service following the disputed play, and has the right to record this disagreement on the scoresheet as an official protest. If the disagreement with the referee's explanation involves the last point of the game, the official protest must be recorded within the first 60 seconds of the timed interval between games. If the final point of the match is disputed, the protest must be recorded before the referees leave the playing area [6.2.4 Commentary, 6.2.5 Commentary, 6.2.6 Commentary, Rule 26.2.3];
 - 6.2.2.2 Ask authorization to change uniforms or equipment; to verify the positions of his/her own team; to check the floor, the net, the ball, etc.; and
 - 6.2.2.3 Request regular game interruptions [Rule 20.1].
- 6.2.2 *Commentary: **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball 14-and-under competition, the coach may act instead of the game captain to perform***

- the functions stated in Rules 6.2.2.1, 6.2.2.2 and 6.2.2.3.*
- 6.2.3 At the end of the match, the team captain thanks the referees, and if there was a previously expressed disagreement with the first referee as to the application of a sanction, confirms it is recorded on the scoresheet.
- 6.2.4 *Commentary: It is advisable to have an assigned Protest Committee available to rule upon a protest as soon as possible prior to the first service following the protest. Such action should preclude playing the match over from the point of protest if the protest is upheld.*
- 6.2.5 *Commentary: Protests considered by the first referee (Protest or Tournament Committee) include a:*
- 6.2.5.1 *misinterpretation of a playing Rule,*
- 6.2.5.2 *failure of the first referee to apply the correct Rule to a given situation, or*
- 6.2.5.3 *failure to charge the correct penalty-sanction for a given fault.*
- 6.2.6 *Commentary: Protest facts recorded on the score sheet include the:*
- 6.2.6.1 *score of the game at the time of the protest,*
- 6.2.6.2 *players and positions at the time of the protest,*
- 6.2.6.3 *player substitutions and team substitutions made up to the protest,*
- 6.2.6.4 *team time-outs taken up to the protest,*
- 6.2.6.5 *situation that caused the protest [6.2.5 Commentary], and*
- 6.2.6.6 *signatures of the scorekeeper, captains and first referee, indicating the facts are correct.*

6.3 COACH AND ASSISTANT COACH(ES)

- 6.3.1 Prior to the match, a coach or team captain records or verifies the names and numbers of players on the roster.
- 6.3.2 Prior to each game, a coach or team captain gives the second referee a completed and signed line-up sheet.
- 6.3.3 During the match, a coach, as well as other team members, may give instructions to the players on the court without disturbing or delaying the match.
- 6.3.3 *Commentary: The coach and assistant coach(es) may stand during play to instruct players in a non-disruptive manner and may stand and move about to speak to team members and players. Throughout the match, this movement shall be restricted to the free zone in front of their team's bench from the extension of the attack line to the warm-up area. Acts deemed disruptive by the first referee shall be sanctioned according to Rule 24. Examples of disruptive acts shall include, but are not limited to:*
 - 6.3.3.1 *loud or abusive language,*
 - 6.3.3.2 *comments to officials,*
 - 6.3.3.3 *comments to opposing teams,*
 - 6.3.3.4 *throwing of objects,*
 - 6.3.3.5 *displaying disgust in an overt manner, or*
 - 6.3.3.6 *interfering with proper officiating of the match.*
- 6.3.4 The coach may request a legal interruption only while at the team bench.

6.4 LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS [Diagram 1]

- 6.4.1 The team benches are located beside the scorekeeper's table, outside the free zone and no nearer the center line extension than the attack line extension.

- 6.4.2 The substitutes must sit on the team bench or stay in the warm-up area [Rule 1.4.4] on the side of their team court. Other team members must sit on the bench if no warm-up area is provided.
- 6.4.3 Only team members are permitted to sit on the bench during the match [Rule 4.1.1].
- 6.4.4 The substitutes may exercise, without balls, in the warm-up areas [Rule 1.4.4].
- 6.4.5 Between games, the players may use balls.

CHAPTER THREE

POINT, GAME AND MATCH WINNER

7. SCORING SYSTEM

7.1 TO WIN A MATCH

- 7.1.1 A match is won by the team that wins the best of three or five games [Signal 13].
- 7.1.1 *Commentary: A playoff game is considered a match and only one game will be played. The match is won by the team that scores either 15 or 25 (as specified in the tournament guidelines) with a two-point advantage. Teams change sides when one team has scored eight or 13 points, respectively.*
- 7.1.2 In the case of a 1-1 or 2-2 tie, the deciding game (third or fifth) is played as a tie-breaker to 15 points and no point cap. Teams change sides when one team has scored eight points [Rule 23.2.2].

7.2 TO WIN A GAME

- 7.2.1 A game (except the deciding [third or fifth] game) is won by the team which first scores 25 points with a minimum lead of two points. In the case of a 24-24 tie, play is continued until a two-point lead is achieved (26-24, 27-25, etc.) [Signal 13].
- 7.2.2 A deciding game (third or fifth) is won by the team which first scores 15 points with a minimum lead of two points. In the case of a 14-14 tie, play is continued until a two-point lead is achieved (16-14, 17-15, etc.) Teams change sides when one team has scored eight points. [Signal 28]

7.3 TO SCORE A POINT

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:

- 7.3.1 If the serving team wins the rally, it scores a point and continues to serve [Signal 1].
- 7.3.2 If the receiving team wins the rally, it scores a point and gains the right to serve [Signal 1].

7.4 DEFAULT AND INCOMPLETE TEAM

- 7.4.1 If a team refuses to play after being directed to do so and warned by the first referee, it is declared in default and loses the match with the result 0-2 or 0-3 for the match and 0-25 for each non-deciding game.
- 7.4.2 If a team fails to return to play following a regular game interval or a regular game interruption, for any reason other than a refusal, after being warned and penalized for delay, the team shall be declared in default and lose that game, retaining any points scored. The opposing team is given the points or points and games needed to win the game(s) and the match.
- 7.4.3 A team declared incomplete for a game or for the match [Rules 9.2.2, 11.4] loses that game or the match. The opposing team is given the points or the points and games needed to win the game(s) or the match. The incomplete team keeps its points and games.
- 7.4.3 *Commentary: A team may become incomplete through injury [Rules 11.4, 22.1.2] or sanction [Rule 24.2].*

CHAPTER FOUR

PREPARATION FOR THE MATCH, STRUCTURE OF PLAY

8. PREPARATION FOR THE MATCH

8.1 COIN TOSS

- 8.1.1 Before the warm-up, the first referee conducts a pre-match conference and coin toss in the presence of the two team captains. The winner of the coin toss chooses:
- 8.1.1.1 the right to serve or to receive the service, or the side of the court.
 - 8.1.1.2 The other captain takes the remaining alternative.
- 8.1.2 If a deciding game is necessary, the first referee will release the teams to their benches and then conduct or designate the second referee to conduct another coin toss [Rule 8.1.1].

8.2 WARM-UP SESSION

A warm-up session must be provided prior to the match as determined by the event organizer.

- 8.2.1 Prior to the match, each team will have a five-minute warm-up period at the net. Only team members are permitted to participate in the warm-up session.
- 8.2.1 *Commentary: **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball adult competition**, it is recommended that teams warm up together at the net for 10 minutes if both team captains agree or 5 minutes separately. For consecutive warm-ups, the team with first service has the court first. **For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball Junior Olympic competition**, it is recommended that teams spend 2 minutes with ball handling and spend 4 minutes separately at the net.*

9. TEAM LINE-UP

9.1 STARTING LINE-UP

- 9.1.1 A team may list one specialized defensive player, “Liberò,” on the line-up sheet for each game, along with the numbers of the six starting regular players. If a Liberò is not designated on the line-up sheet for a game, the team may not use a Liberò in that game [Rules 11.2.1 and 11.3].
- 9.1.2 At least two minutes before the start of a match and 30 seconds prior to the expiration of the intermission between games, a coach or game captain submits the team’s starting line-up on a signed line-up sheet to the second referee [Rule 10.1.2, 23.1.1 Commentary].
- 9.1.2 *Commentary: For failure to adhere to Rule 9.1.2, a team shall be issued a team delay warning. After an additional 30 seconds, if the line-up has not been submitted, the team will be charged with a team delay penalty. If the team continues to delay, the team shall default the game. If failure to adhere to Rule 9.1.2 is because of insufficient players on a team to begin a match, after a team defaults the first game of a match, an interval of up to 10 minutes shall be allowed for the team to produce sufficient players to play the next game. If the team has six players present prior to the expiration of this interval, play shall begin immediately. If, after the 10-minute interval a team does not have at least six players present and ready to play, the second game shall be declared a default. If the match consists of the best three out of five games, an additional 10-minute interval shall be allowed before declaring the match a default.*
- 9.1.3 Once the line-up sheet has been submitted, the line-up cannot be changed without a legal substitution.

- 9.1.4 If a discrepancy exists between the line-up sheet and actual positions of players, the players must move to the positions indicated on the line-up sheet before the start of the game. No penalty will be charged. If one or more players on the court are not recorded on the line-up sheet, the players on the court must be changed according to the line-up sheet without a penalty being charged. However, if the coach/captain wishes to keep such unrecorded player(s) on the court, a request for a legal substitution(s) must be made and the substitution(s) recorded on the scoresheet.

9.2 ROTATION ORDER

- 9.2.1 Rotation order as determined by the starting line-up must be maintained throughout the game.
- 9.2.2 There must always be six players per team to begin a rally [Rule 4.1.1].

10. PLAYERS' POSITIONS AND ROTATION

10.1 POSITIONS

- 10.1.1 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. Violations of the center line are judged as stated in Rule 16.3.2.1.
- 10.1.2 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).
- 10.1.3 The positions of players are determined and judged according to the positions of their feet contacting the court as follows [Diagrams 4A and 4B]:

- 10.1.3.1 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.
- 10.1.3.2 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.
- 10.1.3 *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.*
- 10.1.4 Once the ball has been served, the players may move to any position on their playing area.

10.2 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.).

10.3 POSITION FAULTS

- 10.3.1 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 [Rule 10.1.3] [Signal 22].
- 10.3.2 If the server commits an illegal service [Rule 17.8] [Signal 17] 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 [Rule 17.9], the position fault is penalized.
- 10.3.3 The position fault is penalized with the loss of a

rally [Rule 13.2.1] [Signal 22], and the players are placed in their correct positions. If the position fault is discovered before the opponents serve, all points scored subsequent to the fault must be cancelled. In addition, all time-outs, substitutions and team sanctions charged subsequent to the commission of the position fault must be cancelled. Individual misconduct sanctions are not cancelled. If the points scored while the player was out of position cannot be determined or the opponents have served, then a loss of rally is the only penalty charged. The opponents retain any points scored.

10.4 ROTATION FAULT

- 10.4.1 A rotation fault is committed when the service is not made according to the rotation order [Rule 9.2]. The penalty is the same as a position fault [Rule 10.3.3] [Signal 22].
- 10.4.2 The scorekeeper should determine the exact moment the rotation fault was committed. If the rotation fault is discovered before the opponents serve, all points scored subsequently by the team at fault must be cancelled. In addition, all time-outs, substitutions and team sanctions charged subsequent to the commission of the rotation fault must be cancelled. Individual misconduct sanctions are not cancelled. 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 opponents retain any points scored.

11. SUBSTITUTION OF PLAYERS

11.1 DEFINITION

A substitution is the act by which the referees authorize a player to leave the court and a substitute to occupy that position [Signal 15].

11.2 LIMITATIONS OF SUBSTITUTION

11.2.1 Twelve substitutions are the maximum permitted per team per game. Substitution of one or more players is permitted at the same time.

11.2.1.1 A player in the starting line-up may leave the game and re-enter, but only in his/her previous position in the line-up that s/he first entered (Exception 11.4).

11.2.1.2 A substitute may enter a game in the position of a teammate of the starting line-up. Unlimited individual entries by a substitute within the team's allowable 12 substitutions are permitted. Each entry must be to the same position in the line-up.

11.2.1.2 *Commentary: The sanction for a wrong position entry request is an improper request.*

11.2.1.3 More than one substitute may enter the game in each position order.

11.3 THE LIBERO PLAYER

11.3.1 The libero may be designated for each game. If a libero is designated for a game, the libero's number must be recorded on the line-up sheet for that game. If a libero is not listed on the line-up sheet for a game, the team may not use a libero in that game [Rule 9.1.1].

11.3.1 *Commentary: The officiating work teams supply an assistant scorekeeper to track libero replacements during the match.*

- 11.3.2 The specific rules for the libero player are as follows:
- 11.3.2.1 The libero must wear a uniform shirt or jacket that is immediately recognized from all angles as being in clear contrast to and distinct from the other members of the team. If other members wear a uniform that is composed of two or more colors (exclusive of sleeve trim, collar trim, seam piping, lettering and numbers), the principal color of the libero's uniform cannot be any of those colors.
 - 11.3.2.2 Playing actions:
 - 11.3.2.2.1 S/he is restricted to perform as a back-row player and is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere (including playing court and free zone) if at the moment of contact the ball is entirely above the top of the net [Signal 24].
 - 11.3.2.2.2 S/he may not serve, block or attempt to block.
 - 11.3.2.2.3 A teammate may not complete an attack-hit when, at the moment of the attack-hit, the ball is entirely above the top of the net, if the ball is coming from an overhand finger pass by a libero in the front zone [Signal 24]. The ball may be freely attacked if the libero makes the same action from behind the front zone.
 - 11.3.2.3 Replacement of players:
 - 11.3.2.3.1 The libero is allowed to replace any player in a back-row position.

- 11.3.2.3.2 Replacements involving the libero are not counted as regular substitutions. They are unlimited, but there must be a rally between two libero replacements. The libero can only be replaced by the player whom s/he replaced.
- 11.3.2.3.3 Replacements can only take place:
 - 11.3.2.3.3.1 After the end of a rally, or at the start of each game after the second referee has checked the starting lineup, and
 - 11.3.2.3.3.2 While the ball is out of play and before the whistle for service.
- 11.3.2.3.4 A replacement made after the whistle for service—but before the service hit—should not be rejected but must be the object of a verbal warning after the end of the rally. Subsequent late replacements must be subject to a delay sanction.
- 11.3.2.3.5 A libero and the player replaced by the libero may enter or leave the court only by the sideline in front of his/her team bench between the attack line and the end line.
- 11.3.2.4 Redesignation of a new libero:
 - 11.3.2.4.1 With the previous approval of the first referee, any player who is not on the court at the moment of the redesignation may be redesignated

as Libero for an injured libero during the game. The injured libero may not re-enter to play for the remainder of the game.

- 11.3.2.4.2 The player redesignated as libero must remain the libero for the remainder of the game.

11.4 EXCEPTIONAL SUBSTITUTION

An injured player who cannot continue playing within 30 seconds must be substituted by legal or exceptional substitution. A team may request a legal time-out but no other substitution action may be taken until the injury situation is resolved [See Rule 22.1.2]. If the injured player is substituted, no time limit is placed on the team to remove the player safely from the playing area and no time-out is assessed. An injured player substituted by exceptional substitution may not return to the game.

11.4.1 If a player is unable to play and a substitution cannot be made under the provisions of Rule 11.2, the player must be replaced, without a penalty being charged, in the following priority:

- 11.4.1.1 by the starter or a substitute who has played in the position of the injured player, or by any substitute who has not already participated in the game;
- 11.4.1.2 by any substitute on the bench, regardless of position previously played;
- 11.4.1.3 by any other substitute; or
- 11.4.1.4 by the libero player.

11.4.2 If an injured player is unable to play and a legal or exceptional substitution cannot be made [Rule 11.4.1], the referee must grant a special time-out of up to three minutes. Play will be resumed as soon as the injured player is able to continue. In no

case shall the special injury time-out exceed three minutes. After the special time-out, a team may request a legal time-out. If, after three minutes, or at the expiration of time-outs granted subsequent to the special time-out, the injured player cannot continue to play, the team is declared incomplete [Rule 7.4.3].

- 11.4.3 No player may be granted more than one three-minute injury time-out during any match. If a player becomes injured to the extent that a second injury time-out would be required, the team is declared incomplete [Rule 7.4.3] [Signal 13].

11.5 SUBSTITUTION FOR EXPULSION

An expelled or disqualified player [Rules 24.2.2, 24.2.3] must be replaced by means of a legal substitution. If this is not possible, the team is declared incomplete [Rule 7.4.3].

11.6 ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION

The following substitutes are illegal [Rule 21.1.3] [Signal 22]:

- 11.6.1 player not on roster,
- 11.6.2 player with illegal number or uniform,
- 11.6.3 player replaced by exceptional substitution,
- 11.6.4 player expelled or disqualified.

11.7 IMPROPER SUBSTITUTION

11.7.1 A substitution is improper if it exceeds the limitations indicated in Rule 11.2, except for an exceptional substitution as provided for in Rule 11.4 [Rule 20.7] [Signal 22].

11.7.2 If it is discovered after the ball is in play that a team has made an improper or illegal substitution, the following procedure shall apply:

- 11.7.2.1 The fault is penalized with the loss of a rally;

- 11.7.2.2 The substitution is corrected. No substitution will be charged to the team or player(s), even if required to correct the wrong entry. In addition, any player or team substitutions charged at the time of the wrong entry shall be removed from the scoresheet as though they had never occurred; and
- 11.7.2.3 The points scored by the team at fault after the fault was committed are cancelled. The opponent's points remain.
- 11.7.2.4 If the team at fault is receiving and discovery is after the opponents have served, all points previously scored by the offending team shall be retained. The serving team will be awarded a point unless the error is discovered after the serving team has scored a point. In this case, no additional point will be awarded.
- 11.7.2.5 If it is not possible to determine when the error first occurred and the offending team is serving, only the last point in that term of service will be removed.

CHAPTER FIVE PLAYING ACTIONS

12. STATES OF PLAY

12.1 BALL IN PLAY

The rally begins with the referee's whistle. The ball is in play from the service contact.

12.2 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 [Rule 13.2].

12.2 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.

12.3 BALL "IN" [Signals 3 & 4]

The ball is "in" when it touches the floor of the playing court, including the boundary lines [Rule 1.3.2].

12.4 BALL "OUT"

The ball is "out" when:

- 12.4.1 no part of the ball contacts either a boundary line or the area within the boundary lines [Signals 5 & 6]; or
- 12.4.2 it contacts an object outside the court, the ceiling [EXCEPTION: 12.4.2 Commentary] or a person out of play [Signals 5 & 6]; or
- 12.4.3 it contacts an antenna, rope, post, supporting apparatus for a post or the net itself outside an antenna/side band [Signals 5 & 6]; or
- 12.4.4 it completely crosses the vertical plane of the

net, partly or totally outside the crossing space [Rules 15.1.1, 15.1.2, 15.1.3, Diagram 5] [Signals 5 & 6];

12.4.5 it touches a player then contacts the floor outside the boundary lines on that player's side of the net [Signals 7 & 8].

12.4 Commentary:

12.4.1 *If benches, bleachers, low hanging baskets or other floor obstructions are less than 2 m (6'6") from the court and interfere with play of the ball, the ball becomes out of play and a playover may be directed at the first referee's discretion.*

12.4.2 *A ball shall remain in play if it contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects 4.6m (15') or more above the playing area. The ball is out of play if it makes contact above the opponent's playing area or above the team's playing area and crosses the plane of the net into the opponent's court.*

12.4.3 *A ball is out of play and a playover directed if it contacts overhead object(s) or the supports (e.g., basketball backboard) less than 4.6 m (15') above the playing area and would have remained playable if the object had not been present.*

12.4.4 *A ball is out of play and a playover directed if it comes to rest on an overhead object above that team's playing area and is still a playable ball.*

12.4.5 *A ball is out of play if it contacts the ceiling or overhead objects, regardless of height, over non-playing areas.*

12.4.6 *If an official, media equipment or personnel, or spectator interferes with a player's attempt to play the ball in the playing area, a playover shall be directed.*

13. PLAYING FAULTS

13.1 DEFINITION

- 13.1.1 Any playing action contrary to the Rules is a playing fault.
- 13.1.2 The referees judge the faults and determine the penalties according to the Rules.

13.2 CONSEQUENCES OF A FAULT

- 13.2.1 The consequence of a fault is a loss of rally [Signal 1]. The opponent of the team committing the fault wins the rally and scores a point.
- 13.2.2 If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is penalized.
- 13.2.3 If two or more faults are committed by two opponents simultaneously, a double fault is committed and the rally is replayed [Signal 20].

14. PLAYING THE BALL

14.1 TEAM HITS

- 14.1.1 Each team is entitled to a maximum of three hits (in addition to blocking [Rule 19.2.1]) to return the ball to the opponents.
- 14.1.2 Team hits include not only intentional hits by the player, but also unintentional contacts with the ball.
- 14.1.3 A player may not contact the ball with two separate and consecutive motions [EXCEPTIONS: Rules 14.2.2 and 19.2.3] [Signal 12].

14.2 SIMULTANEOUS CONTACT

- 14.2.1 Two or more players may touch the ball at the same moment.
- 14.2.2 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 the simultaneous contact is not the third team contact.

- 14.2.3 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.
- 14.2.4 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 [Rule 14.2.3].

14.3 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 [16.1.2 Commentary].

14.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT

- 14.4.1 The ball may touch any part of the body.
- 14.4.2 The ball must be hit, not caught or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.
- 14.4.3 The ball may touch various parts of the body, provided that the contacts take place simultaneously. EXCEPTIONS:
 - 14.4.3.1 During blocking, consecutive contacts [Rule 19.4.1] may occur by one or more blockers, provided the contacts occur during one action.

- 14.4.3.2 During the first hit of the team (not blocking [Rule 19.2]), the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action.
- 14.4.3.2 *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. These include contacts involving "finger-action" on the ball and contact with the foot. The ball, however, may not be caught and/or thrown [Rule 14.4.2].*

14.5 FAULTS IN PLAYING THE BALL

- 14.5.1 Four Hits: A team contacts the ball four times before returning it to the opponents [Rule 14.1.1] [Signal 25].
- 14.5.2 Assisted Hit: A player takes support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball [Rule 14.3, 16.1.2 Commentary] [Signal 17].
- 14.5.3 Catch: A player does not hit the ball, and the ball is caught and thrown [Rule 14.4.2] [Signal 11].
- 14.5.4 Double Contact: A player contacts the ball twice in succession, or the ball contacts vari-

ous parts of the body successively [Rules 14.1.3, 14.4.3] [Signal 12].

- 14.5.5 Illegal Hit: A player, in a non-playing area, plays a ball [Signal 5].

15. BALL AT THE NET

15.1 BALL CROSSING THE NET

- 15.1.1 A ball sent to the opponent's playing area must pass over the net within the crossing space [Diagram 5]. The crossing space is the part of the vertical plane of the net limited:
- 15.1.1.1 at the sides, by each antenna and its imaginary extension, and
 - 15.1.1.2 above, by the ceiling.
- 15.1.2 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.
- 15.1.3 The ball is "out" when it completely crosses the space under the net [Signal 2].

15.2 BALL TOUCHING THE NET

The ball may touch the net while crossing it [Rule 15.1.1] [Rule 17.9.3.1].

15.3 BALL IN THE NET

- 15.3.1 A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits.
- 15.3.2 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, it is a loss of rally [Signal 1].

16. PLAYER AT THE NET

16.1 PLAYING SPACE

Each team must play within its own playing area and space.

16.1 Commentary:

16.1.1 Players may play the ball over a non-playing area if they have a body part in contact with the playing area at the time the ball is contacted. They may enter the non-playing area after playing the ball.

16.1.1 Commentary. Non-playing areas are defined as the:

16.1.1.1 walls, bleachers or other spectator seating areas;

16.1.1.2 team benches and any area behind team benches;

16.1.1.3 area between the scorekeeper's table and team benches; and

16.1.1.4 any other area outlined in the pre-match conference by the first referee [Rule 26.3.1.2].

16.1.2 Commentary: If nets or dividers are separating courts, only the player attempting to play the ball may move the net or divider to play the ball [Rule 14.3].

16.1.3 Commentary: When competition is scheduled or is occurring on an adjacent court(s), it is a fault for a player to enter the adjacent court(s) to play a ball or after playing a ball [Signal 5]. The free zone, including the service zone, on an adjacent court is a playable area.

16.2 REACHING BEYOND THE NET

16.2.1 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.

- 16.2.2 A player making an attack-hit is permitted to pass hand(s) beyond the net after the attack-hit, provided the ball is contacted within his/her own playing space.
- 16.2.3 A player is permitted to pass hand(s) beyond the net inside the antennas and contact the ball over the opponent's court on his or her team's first or second hit, provided the ball has not completely crossed the vertical plane of the net and is directed back into the player's own playing space.

16.3 PENETRATION UNDER THE NET

- 16.3.1 A player may reach or penetrate into the opponent's court and/or space under the net, provided this does not interfere with the opponent's play.
- 16.3.2 Penetration into the opponent's court, beyond the center line to:
 - 16.3.2.1 touch the opponent's court with (a) hand(s), foot or feet is permitted, provided some part of the penetrating hand(s)/foot/feet remains either in contact with or directly above the center line;
 - 16.3.2.2 contact the opponent's court with any other part of the body (except hair) is a fault [Signal 10].
- 16.3.3 A player may enter the opponent's court only after the ball is out of play [Rule 12.2]. A player may enter into the opponent's free zone, provided this does not interfere with the opponent's play.

16.4 CONTACT WITH THE NET

- 16.4.1 It is a fault to touch any part of the net or the antennas, except for incidental contact by a player's hair and insignificant contact by a player not involved in the action of playing the ball [Signal 19].
- 16.4.2 A player may touch a post, rope or any other object outside the total length of the net, provided this contact does not interfere with play.
- 16.4.3 When the ball is driven into the net and causes it to touch an opponent, no fault is committed.

16.5 PLAYER'S FAULTS AT THE NET

The following faults result in a loss of rally: A player

- 16.5.1 touches the ball or an opponent in the opponent's space before or during the opponent's attack-hit [Rules 16.2.1, 16.3.1, 19.3] [Signal 23];
- 16.5.2 penetrates into the opponent's space under the net interfering with the opponent's play [Rule 16.3.1] [Signal 10];
- 16.5.3 penetrates into the opponent's court [Rule 16.3.2] [Signal 10]; or
- 16.5.4 touches the net while in the action of playing the ball [Rule 16.4.1] [Signal 19].

17. SERVICE

17.1 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.

17.2 FIRST SERVICE IN A GAME

- 17.2.1 The first service of game No. 1 and any deciding game is executed by the team determined

by the coin toss [Rule 8.1].

- 17.2.2 The other games will be started with service by the team that did not serve first in the previous game.

17.3 SERVICE ORDER

- 17.3.1 The players must follow the service order recorded on the line-up sheet [Rule 9.2].
- 17.3.2 After the first service in a game, the player to serve is determined as follows:
- 17.3.2.1 When the serving team wins the rally, the player who served before serves again.
- 17.3.2.2 When the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve and rotates [Rule 10.2]. The player who moves from the right front-row position (player position 2) to the right back-row position (player position 1) will serve.

17.4 AUTHORIZATION OF THE SERVICE

The first referee authorizes the service after having checked that the server is in possession of the ball in the service zone or free zone behind the end line, on a playable surface, and the teams are ready to play [Signal 16].

17.5 EXECUTION OF THE SERVICE

- 17.5.1 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) or the playing surface outside the zone. After the service, the player may step or land outside the zone including the court.

- 17.5.2 The server must contact the ball within 8 seconds after the first referee whistles for service.
- 17.5.2 *Commentary: If Rule 17.6 is being used for 14-and-younger age groups, the server must contact the ball within 5 seconds after the first referee whistles for service.*
- 17.5.3 A service executed before the referee's whistle is cancelled and repeated.
- 17.5.3 *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 and the rally completed.*
- 17.5.4 After clearly being tossed or released, the ball shall be contacted with one hand or any part of one arm before it touches the playing surface.
- 17.5.5 Only one toss or release of the ball, which can be considered to be part of the service action, is allowed.

17.6 SERVICE TOSS

For nationally sanctioned USA Volleyball competition in the 14-and-younger age divisions, the following service tossing error Rule will be used. It may be adopted for development purposes at all age levels by volleyball sponsoring organizations using U.S. Volleyball Rules Modified.

- 17.6.1 If the ball, after having been tossed or released by the server, lands without touching the player, it is considered a service tossing error.
- 17.6.2 After a service tossing error, the referee must authorize the service again, and the server must execute it within the next five seconds.

- 17.6.3 One service tossing error is permitted for each service.
- 17.6.4 After the whistle for the service, no other actions (requests for line-up check, time-out, etc.) may be considered until after the ball has been served and the rally completed. 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 reserve is considered to be part of a single effort to serve and must be completed before any requests may be considered.

17.7 SCREENING

The players of the serving team must not screen the opponents from seeing the contact for service or the path of the ball.

- 17.7.1 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 [Signal 21].
- 17.7.1 *Commentary: A sanction may be issued for distracting or moving sideways to prevent an opponent from seeing the serve, even if the ball is not served over that player [Rule 24.2] [Signal 21].*
- 17.7.2 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 [Diagram 6].
- 17.7.2 *Commentary: The factors to be weighed when judging whether a screen has been committed are the: (a) relative positions of the players on the serving team; (b) path of*

the serve; (c) speed of the serve; and (d) trajectory of the serve. If the players of the serving team are positioned close to each other, the serve passes over these players, is fast and has a low trajectory, the probability is greater that a screen has been committed. The probability that a screen has been committed is lower if the: (a) players of the serving team are not positioned close to each other or are attempting to prevent the commission of a screen (i.e., bending over); (b) path of the serve is not over the players; (c) speed of the serve is slow; or (d) trajectory of the serve is high.

17.8 ILLEGAL SERVICE

The following faults lead to a change of service, even if the opponent has a position fault [Rule 10.3]. The server:

- 17.8.1 violates the service order [Rule 17.3] [Signal 22],
- 17.8.2 does not execute the service properly [Rule 17.5] [Signal 17 or 18], or
- 17.8.3 violates the rule of service tossing error [Rule 17.6] [Signal 17].

17.9 SERVICE FAULTS

After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault (unless there is a position fault) if the ball:

- 17.9.1 touches a player of the serving team [Signal 19],
- 17.9.2 fails to pass through the crossing space [Rule 15.1.1] [Signal 19],
- 17.9.3 touches the antenna or other external object [Rule 15.2.1] [Signals 5 & 6],
- 17.9.4 lands "out" [Rule 12.4] [Signals 5 & 6], or

- 17.9.5 passes over an individual or collective screen [Rule 17.7] [Signal 21].

18. ATTACK-HIT

18.1 DEFINITION

All actions directing the ball toward the opponent, except a serve or block, are attack-hits.

- 18.1.1 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.
- 18.1.2 An attack-hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by an opponent.

18.2 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 18.4.4].

18.3 RESTRICTIONS TO A BACK-ROW PLAYER'S ATTACK-HIT

- 18.3.1 A back-row player may complete an attack-hit at any height from behind the front zone [Rule 1.4.1]. 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 [Diagram 7A].
- 18.3.2 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 [Diagram 7B].

18.4 ATTACK-HIT FAULTS

18.4 *Commentary: If an attack-hit fault is completed simulta-*

neously with a blocking fault [Rule 19.5] by the opponents, a double fault is committed [Rule 13.2.3] [Signal 20].

- 18.4.1 A player initiates an attack-hit on the ball completely within the playing space of the opposing team [Rule 16.2] [Signal 23].
- 18.4.2 A player hits the ball “out” [Rule 12.4] [Signals 5 or 6].
- 18.4.3 A back-row player completes an attack-hit from the front zone [Rule 18.3.1], when, at the moment of the attack-hit, the ball is entirely above the top of the net [Rule 18.3.2] [Signal 24].
- 18.4.4 A player completes an attack-hit on the opponent’s serve when the ball is entirely above the top of the net [Signal 24].

19. BLOCK

19.1 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.

- 19.1.1 Block Attempt: A block attempt is the action of blocking without touching the ball.
- 19.1.2 Completed Block: A block is completed whenever the ball is touched by a blocker [Diagram 8]. Only front-row players are permitted to complete a block.
- 19.1.3 Collective Block: A collective block is executed by more than one player in close proximity. It is completed when one of the players touches the ball.

19.2 BLOCK AND TEAM HITS

- 19.2.1 A block contact is not counted as a team hit [Rule 14.1.1].

- 19.2.2 After a block contact, a team is entitled to three hits to return the ball to the opponents.
- 19.2.3 The first hit after the block may be executed by any player, including the player who contacted the ball to complete the block.

19.3 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.

- 19.3.1 Blocking of the ball across the net above the opponent's team area shall be permitted, provided:
 - 19.3.1.1 the block is made after the opponents have executed an attack-hit, or
 - 19.3.1.2 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.
 - 19.3.1.3 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.
- 19.3.2 Any third team hit by the opponent is an attack-hit and may be blocked at any time after the contact.

19.4 BLOCKING CONTACT

- 19.4.1 Consecutive (quick and continuous) contacts may occur by one or more blockers, provided the contacts are made during one action.
- 19.4.1 *Commentary: A block is a deflection of a ball*

coming from the opponents. Accordingly, it is a double contact fault if a player uses successive contacts while directing a ball toward the opponents during the execution of the second or third team hit.

- 19.4.2 These contacts may occur with any part of the body.

19.5 BLOCKING FAULTS

19.5 *Commentary: If a blocking fault is committed simultaneously with the completion of an attack-hit fault [Rule 18.4] by the opponent, a double fault is committed [Rule 13.2.3] [Signal 20].*

- 19.5.1 A blocker touches the ball in the opponent's space before or simultaneously with the opponent's attack-hit [Rule 19.3] [Signal 23].
- 19.5.2 A back-row player completes a block or participates in a completed collective block [Rules 19.1.2, 19.1.3] [Signal 21].
- 19.5.3 A blocker contacts the ball in the opponent's space from outside an antenna [Rule 19.3] [Signal 21].
- 19.5.4 A player blocks the opponent's service [Signal 21].
- 19.5.5 The ball lands "out" after contacting the block [Rule 12.4] [Signals 5, 6, 7 or 8].

CHAPTER SIX INTERRUPTIONS AND DELAYS

20. REGULAR GAME INTERRUPTIONS

20.1 CATEGORIES

Regular game interruptions are time-outs [Rule 20.5] [Signal 14] and substitutions [Rule 20.6] [Signal 15].

20.2 NUMBER OF REGULAR INTERRUPTIONS

20.2.1 Each team is entitled to a maximum of two time-outs per game.

20.2.2 Each team is entitled to 12 player substitutions per game.

20.3 REQUEST FOR REGULAR INTERRUPTIONS

Interruptions must be requested only by the coach or game captain only when the ball is out of play and before the whistle for service, by showing one of the corresponding hand signals [Signal 14 or 15]. A request for a time-out or a substitution before the start of a game is permitted.

20.3.1 If an incoming substitute enters the substitution zone, the action is considered a substitution request by the coach/captain. No further action by the coach/captain is required. Any significant delay between incoming substitutes entering the substitution zone shall result in the team being limited to one substitute.

20.4 SEQUENCE OF INTERRUPTIONS

One or two time-outs and one request for player substitution by either team or both teams may follow one another, with no need to resume the game. A team is not allowed to request consecutive interruptions for player substitution until the game has been resumed or a legal time-out has been requested and granted. Substitution of one or more players may be permitted during the same interruption [Rule 20.6.2].

20.5 TIME-OUT

20.5.1 A time-out shall last for 30 seconds.

20.5.2 During a time-out, the players may remain on the court or go to the free zone near their team bench. Any member of the team listed on the team roster may participate in the time-out. Coaches and non-playing team members may not enter the court. Referees may direct teams to move to the free zone near their team bench for administrative purposes. Teams may return to the court when permitted by the referees.

20.6 PLAYER SUBSTITUTION

20.6.1 A substitution shall last only the time needed for recording the substitution on the scoresheet and allowing the entry and exit of the teammates.

20.6.2 If the coach or captain intends to make more than one substitution, the number must be signaled at the time of the request. In this case, substitutions must be made in succession.

20.6.2.1 Commentary: If a request is made for two substitutions and includes both a legal and an improper entry, the legal substitution is allowed, the improper substitution is denied

and an improper request or team delay (if team has already been charged with improper request) is recorded for the team [Rule 20.7].

20.6.2.2 Commentary: If the coach or captain fails to indicate that more than one substitution is desired, the second referee shall permit only one substitution and charge the team with an improper request.

20.6.3 At the moment of the request, the substitute(s) must be ready to enter [Rule 1.4.3]. If that is not the case, the request for substitution is not granted, and the team is sanctioned for a team delay [Rule 21.2] [Signal 27].

20.6.3 *Commentary: A delay in substitution results in refusing the request for that substitution. No additional request for substitution from that team may be made until the next interval when the ball is out of play or a team has been granted a time-out.*

20.6.4 Substitution must be carried out within the substitution zone [Rule 1.4.3].

20.7 IMPROPER REQUESTS

Any improper request that does not affect or delay a game shall be rejected without a penalty being charged, unless repeated in the same game [Rule 21.1.4]. An improper request shall be recorded on the scoresheet. EXCEPTION: If a change in request is due to a referee's mind change, the request will be honored and no sanction charged. Any improper request that does affect or delay a game is a team delay [Rule 21.1] and shall be sanctioned accordingly [Rule 21.2]. Examples of an improper request are requests for interruption:

- 20.7.1 during a rally or at the moment of or after the whistle to serve [Rule 20.3],
 - 20.7.2 by a team member other than the captain or the coach [Rule 20.3],
 - 20.7.3 for player substitution before the game has been resumed from a previous substitution request by the same team. EXCEPTION: A legal time-out by either team has been requested and granted [Rule 20.4],
 - 20.7.4 for a time-out after having exhausted the authorized number of time-outs,
 - 20.7.5 for a substitution after having exhausted the authorized number of team substitutions [Rule 20.2], or
 - 20.7.6 for a player substitution that would result in a wrong position entry [11.2.1.2, 11.2.2.2 Commentary].
- 20.7 *Commentary: A request for first or second time-out may be honored immediately subsequent to an improper request for substitution because of wrong player or excess team substitution. A proper request for substitution may be honored immediately subsequent to an improper request for time-out.*

21. DELAYS TO THE GAME

21.1 TYPES OF DELAY

Any action of a team that delays resumption of the game or match is a delay. It is a team delay [Signal 27] to:

- 21.1.1 delay a substitution [Rule 20.6.3];
- 21.1.2 prolong any regular game interruption, after having been instructed to resume the game;
- 21.1.3 request an illegal substitution: player not on roster, disqualified/expelled team member, illegal uniform/number, player replaced

- by exceptional substitution [Rule 11.5];
- 21.1.4 make a second improper request in the same game [Rule 20.7];
- 21.1.5 delay the game by a team member [Rule 6.1.5];
- 21.1.6 fail to report to court when instructed to start a game;
- 21.1.7 have a player on court wearing jewelry or illegal equipment;
- 21.1.8 fail to submit lineup in a timely manner.

21.2 SANCTIONS FOR DELAYS

- 21.2.1 The first delay by a team in a game is sanctioned as a team delay warning [Signal 27 (1)].
- 21.2.2 The second and following delays of any type by the same team in the same game constitute faults and are charged as team delay penalties: loss of a rally [Signal 27 (2)].
- 21.1.2 *Commentary: An improper request following the first team delay in a game is charged as team delay penalty, loss of rally [Signal 27 (2)].*

22. EXCEPTIONAL GAME INTERRUPTIONS

22.1 ACCIDENT/INJURY

- 22.1.1 Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, a referee must stop the game immediately. The rally is replayed [Signal 20].
- 22.1.2 If substitution of an injured player cannot be made, legally or exceptionally [Rule 11.4], the player is given a three-minute recovery time, but not more than once for the same player in the match. If the player does not recover, the team is declared incomplete [Rules 7.4.3, 9.2.2, 11.3.2.4, 11.4] [Signal 13].

22.2 EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE

If any external interference occurs during a game, play must be stopped and the rally replayed [Signal 20].

22.3 PROLONGED INTERRUPTIONS

If unforeseen circumstances interrupt the match, the first referee and the organizer (Championship Committee, if there is one) shall decide the measures to be taken to re-establish normal conditions.

22.3.1 Should one or several interruptions occur, not exceeding four hours in total length, the interrupted game:

22.3.1.1 shall continue normally with the same score, players and positions if the match is resumed on the same playing court. The games already played will retain their scores.

22.3.1.2 is cancelled and replayed with the same starting line-ups if the match is resumed on another court. The games already played will retain their scores.

22.3.2 Should one or several interruptions occur, exceeding four hours in total length, the match shall be replayed.

23. INTERVALS AND CHANGES OF COURTS

23.1 INTERVALS

The interval between games lasts three minutes. During this period of time, the change of team courts and line-up registration of the teams are made.

23.1.1 *Commentary: The second referee will start*

a timer when the first referee executes Signal 13, End of Game. At two minutes 30 seconds, s/he will whistle for both teams to return to the court in the correct line-up. The line-up for the next game must be submitted by this time [Rule 6.3.2].

- 23.1.2 *Commentary: An extended interval may be used between games two and three, provided the teams competing in the match have been advised of the extended interval prior to the match. No interval is to exceed 10 minutes, including any time for team warm-up. If this interval lasts no more than five minutes, the game will commence immediately. If it is more than five minutes, a three-minute warm-up should be included in the interval.*

23.2 CHANGE OF COURTS

- 23.2.1 After each game, except when a deciding game is required, the teams will immediately change playing areas and benches. The players move to their right until they reach their new bench area with the team on the left passing the first referee and then proceeding directly to the bench [Signal 28] [Rule 8.1.2].
- 23.2.2 In the deciding game, when either team reaches eight points, both teams change playing courts without delay [Signal 28], and the player positions remain the same. If the change is not made at the proper time, it will take place as soon as the error is noticed. The score at the time the change is made remains the same.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MISCONDUCT

24. MISCONDUCT

Inappropriate conduct by a team member toward officials, opponents, teammates or spectators is classified in four categories according to the degree of the offense.

24.1 CATEGORIES

- 24.1.1 **Minor misconduct** offenses are not subject to sanctions. It is the first referee's duty to prevent the teams from approaching the sanctioning level by issuing a verbal or hand signal warning to the team through the game captain. This warning is not a penalty and has no immediate consequences. It should not be recorded on the scoresheet.
- 24.1.2 **Rude conduct:** acting contrary to good manners or moral principles, expressing contempt.
- 24.1.3 **Offensive conduct:** defamatory or insulting words or gestures.
- 24.1.4 **Aggression:** physical attack or intended aggression.

24.2 SANCTIONS

Depending on the degree of the team member's conduct and the judgment of the first referee, the sanctions to be applied and recorded on the scoresheet are:

- 24.2.1 **Penalty:** For rude conduct, the team is penalized with the loss of a rally. The opponent scores a point. The sanction is recorded on the scoresheet with game score and uniform number of the team member involved [Signal 25(1)].
- 24.2.2 **Expulsion:** Offensive conduct or repeated

rude conduct is sanctioned by expulsion. The team member must leave the playing area, bench and warm-up area for the remainder of the game. The sanction is recorded on the scoresheet with the game score and the uniform number of the team member involved [Signal 26(2)]. No additional penalty (loss of rally) will be charged. If an expelled team member continues to engage in misconduct, s/he is subject to further individual sanction [Signal 26(3)].

- 24.2.3 **Disqualification:** For repeated offensive conduct (expulsion) or for aggression, the team member must leave the playing area, bench, warm-up area and spectator area for the remainder of the match. The sanction is recorded on the scoresheet with game score and uniform number of the team member involved [Signal 26(3)]. No additional penalty (loss of rally) will be charged.

24.3 SANCTION SCALE

The repetition of misconduct by the same team member in the same game is sanctioned progressively as shown in the Misconduct Sanction Scale [Diagram 9].

- 24.3.1 A penalty for rude conduct does not require a previous sanction.
- 24.3.2 Expulsion due to offensive conduct does not require a previous sanction.
- 24.3.3 Disqualification due to aggression does not require a previous sanction.

24.4 MISCONDUCT BEFORE AND BETWEEN GAMES

Any misconduct occurring before or between games is sanctioned according to Rule 24.2; sanctions apply at the beginning of the following game.

24.5 SANCTION CARDS

24.5.1	Warning	verbal or hand signal only
24.5.2	Penalty	yellow card
24.5.3	Expulsion	red card
24.5.4	Disqualification	yellow + red card jointly

SECTION II

THE OFFICIALS, THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND OFFICIAL HAND SIGNALS

CHAPTER EIGHT

OFFICIALS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

25. CORPS OF OFFICIALS AND PROCEDURES

25.1 COMPOSITION

The corps of officials for a match is composed of the following: the first referee, the second referee, the scorekeeper and two or four line judges. Their locations are shown in Diagram 10.

25.2 PROCEDURES

25.2.1 Only the first and second referees may blow whistles during the match:

25.2.1 *Commentary: The scorekeeper may use an audible device, including a whistle, to notify the referees of a rotation fault.*

25.2.1.1 The first referee gives the signal for the service that begins the rally [Signal 16].

25.2.1.2 The first or second referee signals the end of a rally, provided that s/he is sure that a fault has been committed and has identified its nature.

25.2.2 The first or second referee will blow the whistle when the ball is out of play to acknowledge a team request.

25.2.3 Immediately after a referee blows the whistle to signal the end of the rally, that referee in-

icates with the official hand signals [Rule 30.]:

25.2.3.1 If the fault is whistled by the first referee, s/he will indicate:

- the team to serve,
- the nature of the fault, and
- the player at fault, if necessary.

The second referee will follow the first referee's hand signals by repeating them.

25.2.3.2 If the fault is whistled by the second referee, s/he will indicate:

- the nature of the fault,
- the player at fault, if necessary, and
- following the first referee's hand signals, the team to serve.

In this case, the first referee will not show the nature of the fault or player at fault.

25.2.3.3 In the case of a double fault, either referee must indicate:

- the nature of the faults,
- the players at fault, if necessary, and
- the team to serve as shown by the first referee's hand signals repeated by the second referee.

26. FIRST REFEREE

26.1 LOCATION

26.1.1 The first referee carries out his/her functions seated or standing on a referee's stand lo-

cated at one end of the net. His/her eye position should be approximately 50 cm (19 1/2") above the top of the net [Diagram 10].

26.2 AUTHORITY

The first referee:

26.2.1 directs the match from the start of the official match protocol until the end of the match.

This includes:

26.2.1.1 having authority over all officials and the members of the teams;

26.2.1.2 having final authority over all decisions;

26.2.1.3 having authority to overrule other officials if s/he is certain one of the officials made an incorrect decision; and

26.2.1.4 replacing an official who is not performing functions properly.

26.2.2 has the power to decide any matter involving the game, including those not provided for in the Rules.

26.2.3 shall not permit any discussion about his/her decisions. However, at the request of the game captain, an explanation will be given on the application or interpretation of the Rules upon which the decision was based. The captain must indicate disagreement with the explanation and reserve the right to submit an official protest about the incident prior to the next service after the disputed play. The first referee must honor this request [6.2.2.1, 6.2.3, 6.2.5 Commentary]. If the disagreement with the referee's explanation involves the last point of the game, the offi-

cial protest must be recorded within the first 60 seconds of the timed interval between games. If the final point of the match is disputed, the protest must be recorded before the referees leave the playing area.

26.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 26.3.1 Prior to the match, the first referee:
 - 26.3.1.1 inspects and approves the playing area, net, ball(s) and other equipment [Rules 1., 2., 3.];
 - 26.3.1.2 establishes ground rules for the playing space alone or through the event administrator;
 - 26.3.1.3 performs the coin toss and conducts the conference with the team captains;
 - 26.3.1.4 controls the warm-up of the teams; and
 - 26.3.1.5 determines whether conditions meet playing requirements [Rules 1., 2., 3.].
- 26.3.2 During the match, only the first referee is authorized to:
 - 26.3.2.1 sanction misconduct and delays;
 - 26.3.2.2 decide upon faults of the server and of the positions of the serving team, including the screen;
 - 26.3.2.3 decide faults in playing the ball;
 - 26.3.2.4 determine whether the playing area, equipment and conditions meet playing requirements [Rules 1., 2., 3.].

27. SECOND REFEREE

27.1 LOCATION

The second referee performs functions standing near the post outside the playing court opposite and facing the first referee [Diagram 10].

27.2 AUTHORITY

The second referee:

- 27.2.1 is the assistant to the first referee with his/her own responsibilities [Rule 27.3] and will replace the first referee if s/he is unable to continue working;
- 27.2.2 may, without whistling, signal faults to the first referee outside his/her responsibilities, including a ball contacting the floor, but may not insist on them;
- 27.2.3 works in conjunction with the scorekeeper;
- 27.2.4 supervises the team members on each bench and reports any misconduct to the first referee;
- 27.2.5 controls the substitutes in the warm-up areas [Rules 1.4.4, 6.5.4];
- 27.2.6 authorizes game interruptions, controls their duration and rejects improper requests;
- 27.2.7 controls the number of time-outs and substitutions used by each team and reports the second time-out, 11th and 12th substitutions to the first referee and the coach/captain concerned;
- 27.2.8 authorizes a substitution or recovery time if there is an injury to a player [Rules 11.3, 22.1.2];
- 27.2.9 checks the floor condition, mainly in the front zone, and also assists the first referee (during the match) in ensuring that equipment meets specifications [Rules 1., 2.]; and

27.2.10 controls the work of the ball retrievers, when utilized.

27.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

27.3.1 The second referee attends the meeting of the team captains with the first referee.

27.3.2 At the start of each game, at the change of courts in the deciding game and whenever necessary, the second referee checks that the actual positions of the players on the court correspond to those on the line-up sheets.

27.3.3 During the match, the second referee decides, whistles and signals:

27.3.3.1 position faults of the receiving team [Rule 10.3.1] [Signal 22];

27.3.3.2 the contact of a player with the net or the antenna [Rule 16.4.1] [Signal 19];

27.3.3.3 penetration into the opponent's court and space under the net [Rules 16.3.1, 16.3.2] [Signal 10];

27.3.3.4 the attack-hit or blocking faults of the back-row players [Rules 18.4.3, 19.5.3] [Signal 24 or 21];

27.3.3.5 when a ball crosses the net outside the crossing space [Rule 15.1.1] or touches the antenna on his/her end [Rule 12.4] [Signal 5];

27.3.3.6 when a ball contacts an outside object that is out of play [Rule 12.4] [Signal 5]; and

27.3.3.7 when a foreign object enters the playing area and presents a hindrance to play or safety to the players [Rule 22.2] [Signal 20].

28. SCOREKEEPER

28.1 LOCATION

The scorekeeper performs his/her functions opposite and facing the first referee [Diagram 10].

28.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The scorekeeper controls the scoresheet (and roster) according to the Rules, cooperating with the second referee.

28.2.1 Prior to the match and game, the scorekeeper:

28.2.1.1 registers the data of the match and teams, and

28.2.1.2 records the players' numbers in serving order from the line-up sheet. Once the line-up is submitted to the scorekeeper, no changes may be made, except as provided for in Rule 9.1.3.

28.2.1.2 *Commentary: If the line-up sheets are not received on time, the scorekeeper immediately notifies the second referee. The line-ups must not be shown to anyone except the referees.*

28.2.2 During the match, the scorekeeper:

28.2.2.1 records the points scored and ensures that the visual score is correct;

28.2.2.2 controls the serving order of each team, reporting any error to the referees immediately after the service contact;

28.2.2.3 records the time-outs for each team and provides the number taken to the referees;

- 28.2.2.4 checks the legality of substitutions before authorizing entry into a game. Records player substitutions and notifies the second referee of the 11th and 12th substitutions,
 - 28.2.2.5 records team and individual sanctions,
 - 28.2.2.6 notifies the referees of a request for interruption that is improper,
 - 28.2.2.7 records all information for a protest, and
 - 28.2.2.8 signals to the referees the ends of the games and the scoring of the eighth (Rule 7.1.1 Commentary) point in the deciding game.
- 28.2.3 At the end of the match, the scorekeeper:
- 28.2.3.1 reviews the scoresheet and records the final result;
 - 28.2.3.2 verifies the results of the game by signing the scoresheet; and
 - 28.2.3.3 in the case of a disagreement with a sanction, writes or permits the team captain to write on the scoresheet a statement of the incident.

29. LINE JUDGES

29.1 LOCATION

If only two line judges are used, they stand at opposite corners of the court, one to the right of the first referee and one to the right of the second referee. Each line judge controls an end line and a sideline [Diagram 10]. If four line judges are used, they stand in the free zone at 1 m to 3 m (3'3" to 9'10") from each corner of the court, on the imaginary extension of the line they control.

29.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

29.2.1 The line judges carry out their functions by using two hands or a single flag [30 cm x 30 cm (12" x 12")].

29.2.1.1 They signal the ball “in” and “out” [Signals 4 & 6] whenever the ball lands near their line(s).

29.2.1.2 They signal touches of “out” balls [Signal 7].

29.2.1.3 They signal when the ball crosses the net outside the crossing space, touches an antenna, etc. [Rule 15.1.1] [Signal 9]. It is primarily the line judge(s) closest to the path of the ball who is responsible for the signal.

29.2.1.4 They signal foot faults of players who are off the court at the time of service [Signal 9].

29.2.1.5 The line judges in charge of the end lines signal foot faults of the server [Rule 17.5.1] [Signal 9].

29.2.1 *Commentary: The decision whether a ball that returns to the attacker’s side did or did not touch the block is that of the first referee with the assistance of the second referee. This decision is not a responsibility of the line judge.*

29.2.2 At the first referee’s request, a line judge must repeat the signal.

CHAPTER NINE OFFICIAL HAND SIGNALS

30. OFFICIAL HAND SIGNALS

30.1 REFEREES' HAND SIGNALS

- 30.1.1 The referees indicate with the appropriate official hand signal the nature of the fault called or the purpose of the interruption authorized. The signal is maintained for a moment, and if it is indicated with one hand, the hand signal is shown on the side of the team which has committed a fault, made a request or received a sanction.
- 30.1.2 The referee then indicates the player who committed the fault, if necessary, or the team that made the request.

30.2 LINE JUDGES' FLAG SIGNALS

The line judges must indicate by official flag signals the nature of the fault called. They must maintain the signal for a moment.