

# Volleyball Rules

## GENERAL INFO

updated 8/10/23

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1. All participants must meet the eligibility requirements listed in the Intramural Sports Participant Handbook. **Each participant must be a current UVA student or UVA Rec member, and must purchase an Intramural Sports Pass for the semester in which the activity is taking place.** All expired memberships must be updated before the individual may play in any game. Each player must present a valid UVA Student ID or current UVA Rec Membership Card before each contest in order to be eligible to participate. Any games in which an ineligible player signs in will be considered a forfeit.
2. **Teams are responsible for keeping their players and spectators under control.** Misconduct of players, coaches, managers or spectators can result in penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain within the area designated by the IM Sports staff.
3. Alcoholic beverages, smoking, and pets are prohibited from all intramural contests.
4. IM Sports Officials/Supervisors will have absolute authority during the contest and can make decisions on any matter or question not specifically covered in the rules.
5. Official USA Volleyball rules will be observed with the following Intramural Sports modifications.

## EQUIPMENT

1. All jewelry must be removed before participating. If jewelry is discovered during a match, the offending team will be given a warning. If jewelry is discovered a second time, the offending player will be removed and may not reenter until the next game, provided that the jewelry has been removed. Medical Alert jewelry may be worn, provided that it is worn in a way that does not create a safety hazard.
2. Appropriate gym footwear must be worn.
3. Hats and any other headwear that has a hard bill or creates a knot-like protrusion are not permitted.
4. Game balls will be provided by Intramural Sports. Teams may use their own balls upon mutual agreement by both team captains.

## PLAYERS

1. Team rosters will be limited to 20 participants.
2. Teams will consist of six players.
3. A minimum of three players is required to begin a game. **A team may not continue with fewer than three players.**
4. **Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.**
5. **If an IM Sports participant is bleeding, they will be removed from the contest immediately. If an IM Sports participant has blood on their clothing, they will be removed from the contest upon detection. The blood may or may not be their own blood. Even a participant who has someone else's blood on their clothing will be**

removed from the contest. The participant is ineligible to re-enter the contest until the contaminated clothing has been removed. Before any participant re-enters the contest, all bleeding must be stopped and any open wound or laceration covered.

## **THE GAME**

### **1. Height of the Net:**

- a. The height of the net shall be seven feet four inches above the floor for Women's League games.
- b. The height of the net shall be eight feet for Men's and Co-Rec League games.

## **SCORING/TIMING**

### **1. To Score a Point:**

- a. Rally Scoring will be used for all games. A point will be awarded with each serve. The winner of the point will also be awarded the next serve.

### **2. To Win a Game:**

- a. A game is won by the team which first scores 25 points with a minimum lead of two points during the first two games.
- b. A deciding game (third game) is won by the team which first scores 15 points with a minimum lead of two points.

### **3. To Win a Match:**

- a. A match is won by the team that wins the best of three games.

### **4. There is no time limit to complete a match.**

## **PREPARATION FOR MATCH**

### **1. Coin Toss:**

- a. The winner of the pre-game coin toss will have the option to choose the right to serve or receive, or to take an end of the court.
- b. The loser of the toss will take the remaining option.

## **PLAYER POSITIONS AND ROTATION**

### **1. Positions:**

- a. At the moment the ball is contacted by the server, each team must be within its own team court in two rows of three players.
- b. Three players are in the front row and three players are in the back row.
- c. The positions of players are determined by the positions of their feet in contact with the floor.
  - i. 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.
  - ii. Each right (left)-side player must have at least part of a foot closer to the right (left) sideline than both feet of the center player in the corresponding row.
- d. Once the ball has been served, players may move to any position on their playing surface.

### **2. Position Faults:**

- a. The players of a team commit a position fault if they are not in their correct positions at the time of the serve.
- b. The position fault is penalized with the loss of rally and the players are placed in their correct positions.

### **3. Rotation:**

- a. Rotation order is determined by the starting lineup and must be maintained throughout the game.
- b. When a team gains the right to serve, its players must move one position clockwise.

**4. Rotation Faults:**

- a. A rotation fault is committed when the service is not made according to the rotation order. The penalty is the same as a position fault.

## **SUBSTITUTIONS**

**1. Limitations of Substitution:**

- a. All substitutes for a team must enter in the same position throughout the game.
- b. Any number of substitutes may enter during the game.

## **STATES OF PLAY**

**1. Ball In Play:**

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

**2. Ball Out of Play:**

- a. The rally ends with the referee's whistle. However, if the whistle was blown due to a committed fault, the ball is out of play at the time of the fault.

**3. Ball In:**

- a. The ball is in when it touches the floor of the playing court, which includes the boundary lines.

**4. Ball Out:**

- a. The ball is out when:
  - i. No part of the ball contacts either a boundary line or the area within the boundary lines.
  - ii. It contacts an object outside the court, the ceiling, the curtains, the bleachers, the basketball goals, or a person out of play.
    1. **If the ball hits the ceiling or lights on your side and the ball comes down on your side it is live.**
  - iii. It contacts an antenna, rope, post, supporting apparatus for a post, or the net itself outside an antenna.
  - iv. It completely crosses the vertical plane of the net, partly or totally outside the crossing zone.
  - v. It touches a player then contacts the floor outside the boundary line on that player's side of the net.

## **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 and scores a point.
- 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.

## **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. Team hits include not only intentional hits by a player, but also unintentional contacts with the ball.
- c. A player may not contact the ball with two separate and consecutive motions.
- d. A player is allowed to set on a serve.

### **2. Simultaneous Contact:**

- a. Two or more players may touch the ball at the same time.
- b. When two or more teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as one contact. Any player may play the ball next if the simultaneous contact 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.

### **3. Assisted Hit:**

- a. A player is not permitted to take support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball. However, a player who is about to commit a fault may be stopped or held back by a teammate.

### **4. Characteristics of the Hit:**

- a. The ball may touch any part of the body.
- b. The ball must be hit, not caught or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.
- c. The ball may touch various parts of the body, provided that the contact occurs simultaneously.
  - i. Exceptions:
    - 1. During blocking, consecutive contacts may occur by one or more blockers, provided that the contacts occur during one action.
    - 2. During the first hit of a team (not blocking), the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action.

### **5. Faults in Playing the Ball:**

- a. Four Hits: A team contacts the ball four times (excluding blocking) 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. Lift: A player does not hit the ball, and the ball is caught and thrown.
- d. Double Hit: 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 the ball.

## **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:
  - i. At the sides, by each antenna and its imaginary extension.
- b. A ball penetrating the opponent's side 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 space under the net.
- 2. **Ball Touching the Net:**
  - a. The ball may touch the net while crossing it.
- 3. **Ball in the Net:**
  - a. A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits.

## PLAYER AT THE NET

1. **Playing Space:**
  - a. Each team must play within its own playing area and space.
    - i. Players may play the ball over non-playing areas, provided that 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.
    - ii. Non-playing areas are defined as:
      1. Walls, bleachers, or other spectator seating areas.
      2. Team benches and areas behind team benches.
2. **Reaching Beyond the Net:**
  - a. In blocking, a blocker may contact the ball beyond the plane of the net inside the antennas, provided that the blocker does not interfere with opponents play.
  - b. A player making an attack hit is permitted to pass hands beyond the net after the hit, provided the ball is contacted within their own playing space.
  - c. A player is permitted to pass hands beyond the net inside the antennas and contact the ball over the opponent's court on their 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.
3. **Penetration Under the Net:**
  - a. **A player may reach or penetrate under the net, provided it does not interfere with the opponent's play.**
  - b. Penetration into the opponent's court, beyond the center line to:
    - i. touch the opponent's court with foot or feet is permitted provided some part of the penetrating foot or feet is in contact with or directly above the center line.
    - ii. touch the opponent's court with any part of the body above the feet is permitted provided that it does not interfere with the opponent's play.
  - c. A player may enter the opponent's court only after the ball is out of play. A player may enter into an opponent's free zone, provided this does not interfere with the opponent's play.
4. **Contact With the Net:**
  - a. **Contact with the net by a player is not a fault unless it interferes with play.**
  - b. Players may touch the post, ropes, or any other object outside the antennae, including the net itself, 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:**
  - a. The following results in loss of rally. A player:
    - ii. Interferes with the opponent's play while penetrating into the opponent's space under the net.
    - iii. A player's foot or feet penetrates completely into the opponent's court.
    - iv. Interferes with the opponent's play by (amongst others):
      - Touching the top band of the net during their action of playing the ball
      - Taking support from the net simultaneously with playing the ball

- Making actions which hinder an opponent's legitimate attempt to play the ball.

## **SERVICE**

1. **Definition:**
  - a. The service is the act of putting the ball into play by the right back-row player who hits the ball with one hand or arm from the service zone.
2. **First Service in a Game**
  - a. The first service of game one and any deciding game is executed by the team determined by the coin toss.
  - b. Other games will be started by service from the team that did not serve first in the previous game.
3. **Service Order:**
  - a. The players must follow service order as dictated by the original lineup.
  - b. After the first service of the game, the player to serve is determined as follows:
    - i. When the serving team wins the rally, the player who served before serves again.
    - ii. When the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve and rotates clockwise.
4. **Authorization of the Service:**
  - a. The 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.
  - b. Once the whistle for service has been given, no other action may be considered until the ball is served and the rally is completed.
5. **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 or the playing surface outside the zone. After the service, the player may step or land anywhere.
  - b. The server must contact the ball within eight seconds after the referee whistles for service.
  - c. A service executed before the referee's whistle is cancelled and repeated.
  - d. 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.
  - e. Only one toss or release of the ball, which can be considered part of the service action, is allowed.
6. **Service Toss:**
  - a. One service tossing error is permitted for each service.
  - b. The server must let the ball drop completely to the ground without touching it.
7. **Screening:**
  - a. The players of the serving team must not screen the opponents from seeing the contact for service or the path of the ball.
    - i. 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.
    - ii. 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.
8. **Illegal Service:**
  - a. The following faults lead to a change of service, even if the opponent has a position fault. The server:
    - i. Violates the service order.
    - ii. Does not execute the service properly.

- iii. Violates the rule of service tossing error.
9. **Service Faults:**
- a. After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault if the ball:
    - i. Touches a player of the serving team.
    - ii. Fails to pass through the crossing space.
    - iii. Touches the antenna or other external object.
    - iv. Lands out.
    - v. Passes over an individual or collective screen.

## **ATTACK HIT**

1. **Definition:**
- a. All actions directing the ball toward the opponent, except a serve or block, are attack hits.
    - i. During an attack hit, tipping with the fingers is permitted if the contact is brief and the ball is not caught or thrown.
    - ii. An attack hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by an opponent.
2. **Front-Row Player's Attack Hit:**
- a. 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.
3. **Restrictions to a Back-Row Player's Attack Hit:**
- a. A back-row player may complete an attack hit from behind the front zone. At takeoff, the 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 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 contact, the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
  - d. A player completes an attack hit on the opponent's serve when the ball is entirely above the top of the net.

## **BLOCK**

1. **Definition:**
- a. Blocking is the action that deflects the ball coming from the opponent by a player close to the net reaching higher than the net.
    - i. Block Attempt: A block attempt is the action of blocking without touching the ball.
    - ii. Completed Block: A block is completed whenever the ball is touched by a blocker. Only front-row players are permitted to complete a block.
    - iii. 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.
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 opponent.
  - c. The first hit after a 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:**

- a. In blocking, a player may place hands and arms beyond the net, inside the antennas, provided that the action does not interfere with the opponent's play.
  - i. Blocking the ball across the net above the opponent's team area is permitted, provided:
    - 1. The block is made after the opponent has executed an attack hit.
    - 2. The block is made after the opponent has hit the ball in such a manner that the ball would, in the referee's judgment, clearly cross the net if not touched by a player and no member of the attacking team is in position to make a play on the ball.
    - 3. The ball is falling near the net and no member of the attacking team could make a play on the ball.
  - ii. Any third hit by the opponent is an attack hit and may be blocked at any time after the contact.

4. **Blocking Contact:**

- a. Consecutive 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 simultaneously with the opponent's attack hit.
- b. A back-row player completes a block or participates in a completed collective block.
- c. A blocker contacts the ball in the opponent's space from outside an antenna.
- d. A player blocks the opponent's service.
- e. The ball lands out after contacting the block.

## REGULAR GAME INTERRUPTIONS

1. **Categories:**

- a. Regular game interruptions are substitution periods and timeouts.

2. **Number of Interruptions:**

- a. Each team is entitled to one 30 second timeout per game.
- b. Each team may make unlimited substitutions during a game.
  - i. Multiple substitutions may enter the game during each rotation to the team that is rotating.
  - ii. Substitutes must enter at the same position throughout the game.

## INTERVALS AND CHANGE OF COURTS

1. **Intervals:**

- a. The interval between games shall be two minutes.

2. **Change of Courts:**

- a. After each game, teams will change playing areas and benches.
- b. In the deciding game, when either team reaches eight points, both teams change playing courts with player positions remaining the same.

## Misconduct

1. **Misconduct:**

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

- i. **Minor Misconduct** offenses are not subject to sanctions. It is the duty of the referee to warn the team through the game captain.
  - ii. **Rude Conduct:** acting contrary to good manners or moral principles, expressing contempt.
  - iii. **Offensive Conduct:** defamatory or insulting words or gestures.
  - iv. **Aggression:** physical attack or intended aggression.
- c. **Sanctions:**
  - i. Depending on the degree of the team member's conduct and the judgment of the referee, the sanctions to be applied are:
    - 1. **Penalty:** For rude conduct, the team is penalized with the loss of a rally. The opponent scores a point. The sanction is recorded with the game score and the uniform number of the team member involved.
    - 2. **Expulsion:** Offensive conduct or repeated rude conduct is sanctioned by expulsion. The team member must leave the team areas for the remainder of the game. The sanction is recorded with the game score and the uniform number of the team member involved. No additional penalty will be charged. If an expelled player continues to engage in rude conduct, further sanctions may be taken.
    - 3. **Disqualification:** For repeated offensive conduct or for aggression, the team member must leave the all team areas, for the remainder of the match. The sanction is recorded with the game score and the uniform number of the team member involved. No additional penalty will be charged.

## Protests

1. Protests will be allowed for participant eligibility and for misapplications of rules. Judgment calls may never be protested.
  - a. **Participant Eligibility:** When a person is believed to be ineligible to participate in an intramural contest, the protesting team's captain or manager must notify the game officials of the eligibility question at the start of the game or when the player in question arrives at the game site. Protests made after these deadlines will not be heard.
  - b. **Misapplication of Rules:** When a participant believes that a game official has misapplied or misinterpreted a published playing rule, the respective team's captain or manager must notify the game officials of the protest before the ball is next whistled ready for service. If the decision in question happens to be the final play of the game, the protesting team must file a protest with the event supervisor before leaving the facility. Protests made after these deadlines will not be heard.

## CO-REC RULES

1. The height of the net will be eight feet.
2. Six players are permitted on the court in Co-Rec play. A team may begin a game with as few as three players.
  - a. No more than 3 players on the court may self-identify as the same gender (Men, Women, or Another Non-Binary) at the same time.
  - b. If a team is playing with less than 6 players, we will follow a +/-1 rule.
3. There are no restrictions on individuals self-identifying as Men, Women, or Another Non-Binary at the net.