



Volleyball 101: A Spectator's Guide to USA Volleyball Rules

Understanding the Sport your Child is Playing

This Quick Reference Guide has been created for volley-moms, volley-dads, and all fans in the Ohio Valley Region (OVR). The OVR is the largest of the 40 USA Volleyball regions with over 30,000 members. It is important to note that the rules which govern juniors' club competition differ significantly from National Federation high school/junior high rules. This guide presents summary points to better acquaint you with the major differences to enhance your enjoyment of the USA Volleyball junior experience. USAV rules are derived directly from the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) and are designed for fewer stoppages of play, which allows players to develop increased skill competency by encouraging "more touches of the ball", and exciting, spectacular play. The goal of the rules is to "keep the ball flying" and to make the competition a fulfilling experience for everyone involved. The FIVB/USAV rules represent the current state of development in our sport. (Highlighted text represents 2025-2027 USAV rules changes.) Thank you for supporting your student athlete. Enjoy the game!

Rule	Interpretation and Application of Rule
Net contact	It is a fault for a player to touch the net between the antennas during the action of playing the ball. It is also a fault to take support from the net to create an advantage over the opponent or to make any action to hinder the opponent's attempt to play the ball. It is not a net fault if the player is not in the action of playing the ball. It is not a fault to touch any part of the net or net equipment outside the antennas.
Centerline violation	A player may encroach into the opponent's court with any part of the body provided some part of the body remains on/above the center line and there is no interference with the opponent. Any body part that completely crosses the center line may not present a safety hazard to the opponents.
Ball lands on a line	Sidelines and end lines are part of the court. When the ball touches any part of a line, it is in-bounds.
Block: Touch or no touch?	A block is the action of a player close to the net, who is reaching higher than the top of the net, to intercept the ball. A block contact is not counted as one of the three allowable team hits regardless of where the ball contacts the blocker during a blocking action (i.e., above/below net height).
Ball "in the plane" above the net	If any part of the ball is directly above the net, the ball is considered 'in the plane'. The ball may be legally played by either team provided contact is made with the part of the ball on their side of the net. Back-row player restrictions still apply.
Back-row player restrictions	If a back-row player in the front zone contacts the ball when the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net, it is an illegal back-row attack if the ball crosses completely beyond the net plane or is touched by the opponent. If a back-row player near the net is reaching above the top of the net and the ball is blocked or hit into them, it is an illegal back-row block.
Double contacts: What is legal?	A double contact during a team's <u>first hit</u> is allowed provided it occurs during one action of playing the ball; the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively. <u>A double contact is allowed during a team's second hit provided a teammate makes the next contact before the ball crosses the net or is legally touched by an opponent.</u> The ball must not be caught or thrown.
Libero rules and restrictions	The Libero may occupy only a back-row position but may play in front of the 3-meter attack line. If the Libero uses an overhand setting action on the ball to direct it to a teammate, the teammate may not attack the ball while it is entirely above the top of the net if the Libero was in the front zone when the ball was set. The Libero is a defensive player and may not complete an attack on the ball from anywhere on the court if, at the moment of contact, the ball is higher than the top of the net. The Libero may serve. <u>A team may designate 0, 1, or 2 Liberos per set.</u>
Work Team responsibilities and rules	Two members (scorer & second referee) must report to the first referee eight minutes prior to the end of the timed warm-up period. The remainder of the crew (line judges, assistant scorer and score card flipper) must report to the court at least four minutes prior to the end of timed warm-ups.
Screening	<u>Players from the serving team are prohibited from raising their hands above their head until the served ball has passed beyond the net. The first referee may warn a team about a potential screen, but a warning is not required.</u>
Jewelry: What is allowed?	Junior players are permitted to wear jewelry provided its nature does not present a concern for safety, i.e., long necklaces with/without pendants, large hoop earrings, etc. This rule is not intended to encourage players to wear jewelry; it simply recognizes that jewelry may be worn without concern. Watches are not considered jewelry and are typically not worn.
Sport Court rules	When the ball is above a non-playing area (i.e., "concrete"), a part of the body must be in contact with the Sport Court when the ball is contacted.
Errant balls from other courts	Replays may ONLY be awarded if: 1) the errant ball interferes or has the potential to interfere with the play; or 2) there is a concern for player safety. A replay is not automatic; the first referee must use his/her discretion and judgment to determine if a replay is appropriate.
Substitutions	<u>A team is permitted 15 substitutions per set.</u>



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Information & Points of Emphasis from the Ohio Valley Region

Be Good Sports! The OVR has a “zero tolerance” policy when it comes to unsporting behavior. With the rise of unsporting behavior in gyms, on athletic fields, and professional sport arenas around the USA and abroad, we ask parents to model and nurture good sporting attitudes and behaviors for their young athlete(s). It is your responsibility to ensure that our youth learn positive behaviors. We ask that you offer encouraging words and praise for all athletes, including your child's opponents. Never openly berate, tease, or demean any student athlete, coach, or referee while attending a USA volleyball event. And remember, the work crew is comprised of children the same age as your child. Treat them the way you would want your child to be treated. An individual exhibiting a pattern of poor behavior is subject to sanction by the OVR, up to and including removal from a facility, a monetary fine to the affiliated club, or being banned from attendance at future OVR events.

Work Crew Responsibilities: The work crew consists of six players from a team that is not playing in the current match. That team will provide a second referee, a scorer, an assistant scorer, a scoreboard operator and two line judges. Ideally the second referee and scorer should attend the pre-match coin toss with the first referee. The entire work crew must be report to the first referee no later than the final four minutes of the timed warm-ups. No electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, iPods or other media players) are allowed courtside or at the score table. The work crew is required to faithfully fulfill the duties to the best of their ability.

The coach from the work crew must be at the scorer's table throughout the entire match and must be available to assist at the score table if necessary. Should a junior player not be able to fulfill the duties of a scorer or second referee, the player's coach must assume this responsibility.

Individuals not listed on a team's roster may not fulfill any of the work crew duties. USAV membership is required. To ensure that work crews abide by the OVR policies regarding pre-match arrival time and electronic devices, there are penalties for non-compliance that may be assessed to the work team by the tournament director.

Team Warm-ups: During the warm-up period prior to a match, spectators or other individuals not listed on the team's roster may not be on the court for any purpose, including ball retrieving during a team's hitting/serving warm-ups. However, these individuals may choose to stand around the outermost perimeter of the playing area to prevent errant practice balls from interfering with a match on an adjacent court. Only registered USAV members who are on the team's roster may participate in warm-up drills and activities on the court.

First Referee Responsibilities: The first referee has the ultimate responsibility for the administration of the match. The R1 has the authority to overrule other members of the officiating team, if necessary. In the OVR, referees are encouraged to work with all members of the support crew, and to teach them how to properly assist with the officiating of a match. In extreme cases, the first referee may replace a member of the support crew.

Because the first referee is located approximately 8-10 feet above the court, they will typically have the best view of the play, thus providing the best position to make the correct call. Line judges usually have the most advantageous view when it comes to calls involving a court boundary line. They are positioned to be looking directly down their respective sideline or end line. But in all cases, it is important to remember that while a play may have seemed clear or obvious from your vantage point courtside, the official (referee, line judge) on the court may be been screened by a player(s) on the court, among other things.

Visual Score: The visual scoreboard or flip score is not the official score. The official score is recorded on the score sheet or VolleyStation scoring app (if used). The visual score is a courtesy for the fans. It is there for your pleasure. If the score is not pleasing to you, please do not look at it or complain about it!

OVR Flash Photography & Video Policy: The OVR prohibits the use of flash photography during match play. Videotaping a team other than your own is also prohibited. Players on the court may not use microphones or ear buds during play or warm-ups. Audio or video recordings posted in a public forum with the intent of criticizing, bullying, or harassing officials or other participants may result in penalties at the discretion of USA Volleyball/OVR.

For additional information, please visit www.ovr.org.