



## Beach Volleyball Quick-Guide v8.3

For the complete beach rules, see the USAV DCR (Rulebook) or study online at [volleyballretraining.com](http://volleyballretraining.com)  
For Further information about Rules or Referee Certification, please contact us at [info@beachcommission.org](mailto:info@beachcommission.org)  
**Rules Changes** are flagged as **NEW**. **Points of emphasis are highlighted**. NCAA rule differences are underlined.

- **Net Heights:** *Note: Heights are measured at center. Height at antennas is allowed to be ¾" higher.*
  - Men 7' 11<sup>5/8"</sup> (2.43m) **Also** Boys' Age Divisions: U19 (18&Under) and U17 (16&Under)
  - Women/Mixed 7' 4<sup>1/8"</sup> (2.24m): **Also** Girl's' Age Divisions: U19 and U17, as well as **both** Girls' and Boys' U15 (14&Under)
  - Youth 6' 11<sup>1/2"</sup> (2.12m): **Both** Girls' and Boys' Age Division U13 (12&Under)
  - Tens' & Under 6' 6" (1.98m): **Both** Girls' and Boys' Age Division U11 (10&Under)
- **Other Specifications:** Net 26' to 28' (8-8.5m) long. Antennas are required. Posts and referee stands (which are suggested) should be padded.
- **Ball:** light-colored, 9-10 oz. (260-280g) weight, with approx. 26" (66-68cm) circumference, at 2.5 to 3.2 psi (1.75-2.25 kg/cm2)
- **Court:** 26'3" x 52'6" (8.0 x 16.0 m) The short diagonal measures 37'1" (11.31m) The court includes its lines: their outside edges are the court boundary.
- **Lines** should be 2" wide and include **adjustable buckles** in all four sides. When possible, the free zone around the court should be marked with banners, etc

### **Spirit of the Game:** Teams play without outside intervention or assistance of any type.

- Spectators, including parents and club-mates, are encouraged to cheer, but may not assist at any time (ex: "calling shots" is prohibited).
- Coaches, when present, may cheer the exceptional play, but may only instruct during timeouts, side-changes, and between sets.

### **Teams (Players & Coaches):** Two Players - no substitutes. The Captain represents the Team to the referees. (Exception: Coach-TO in Ages 18 & Under)

- Number of Coaches allowed: USAV: A coach and no more than one assistant coach. NCAA: No more than 3 coaches
- Coaches may only participate in on-court drills prior to the coin toss and official warm-up.
- During the official timed warm-up, coaches may instruct from the sideline, but may not engage in drills.
- During play, coaches observe from the player area. Instruction only takes place during timeouts, between sets, and (non-disruptively) during side-changes.
- Coaches may not attempt to influence or question the official's judgment at any time.

### **Uniforms:** Team uniforms may or may not be required. Bathing suits or "shorts & tops" are typical requirements.

- Cold weather gear (sweats suits, etc.) may be allowed. (Guideline temperature: "below 60 degrees")
- When uniforms are required, they should be worn so that player numbers are visible at the coin toss and thereafter.
  - NCAA: Tank tops covering abdomen & shorts with min 1" inseam required. Partners wear identical uniforms. Team displays matched color scheme.
  - **NEW:** USAV: if used, legal uniform numbers are 1-99 inclusive. NCAA: beach uniforms use basketball numbering system.

### **Match Format:** "Ten Minute" Pre-Match Protocol: NCAA: coin toss at -10, then warm-up. USAV: coin toss at -7. (Juniors may vary)

- Winner of the coin toss chooses serve, receive or side. The other captain chooses from remaining options. Both captains state service order for the set.
- After the coin toss, the four players (only) share unlimited access to the entire court (Coaches may be on sideline, but not be involved in drills)
- Beach volleyball is played as Match Play, best-of-three sets played to 21, 21, (15). Rally scoring; win by two.
  - Scoring may be modified by Tournament Directors for specific events, (ex: "one set to 28," or "two sets only to 21, without deciding set").
  - All matches should utilize the etiquette of pre-match and post-match handshakes at the net between opponents.
  - Unless a referee is present to whistle the start and end of each rally, the players are encouraged to "call the score" before serving.
- **SERVICE ORDER:** Players alternate terms of service. **Officials "call out" the correct server for each rally and actively prevent wrong-server faults.**
- **POSITION FAULTS:** Players (other than server) must be on court at moment of service (no other requirement).
- **COURT SWITCH** After 7 points of play in sets 1 and 2, the teams should switch sides. This is not a time out or water break; players switch, then resume play.
  - Coaches may offer brief instruction during the court switch, but must not delay the match.
- **SCREENING:** Serving team must take positions so that the receiving team is able to see EITHER the server OR the flight of the ball.
  - **Fair play:** receiving team should use the "raised hand" signal to indicate a potential screen. **Serving team should adjust position, without delay.**
- **DELAY:** The time between rallies should not exceed 12 seconds. In locations without banners or ball-retrievers, this guideline may be extended.
  - Violations result in Delay Warning, with subsequent occurrences leading to Delay Penalty.
- Each team may call one **TIMEOUT** per set. Timeouts last 30 seconds (**NEW NCAA: 90 sec**) but teams are granted an extra 30 seconds to move from/to court
  - USAV beach timeouts take 60 seconds total, and NCAA timeouts take 2 minutes total. *In both cases the ref whistles when 15 sec. remain.*
  - Teams are reminded that **timeouts should be taken near court.** (No running off to tents) Shade should be provided near-court
  - Coaches in age groups U-19 (18 & Under) may call time out for their team. NCAA: Coaches may suggest a time out to their captain.
- A **"Technical Timeout"** (TTO) after the 21<sup>st</sup> point of sets 1 and 2 is suggested. (*Individual events may opt to add or reduce number of TTOs.*)
  - ❖ **NEW: The interval between sets is 2 minutes.** *This "Test Rule" for USAV should be used whenever possible.* NCAA: The 2-minute TO is fully approved.
    - Referee offers "first choice for set 2" to the captain of the team that lost the first coin-toss, and confirms "who will serve first for the team in this set"
    - Then offers the other captain the remaining choice and confirms "who will serve first for the team in this set"
    - If there is a deciding (3<sup>rd</sup>) set, the 1<sup>st</sup> referee should conduct another coin toss, and offer the same choices.
- Deciding 3<sup>rd</sup> Set: New coin toss; same choices. Play to 15, win by two. Switch sides on multiples of 5. *There is not a Technical Time Out in the deciding set.*
- At the end of the match, all players meet at the net near the referee stand to shake hands with each other, then with the officials.

### **Disputes:** A Captain may approach the referee to request an explanation of an applied rule. (exception: judgment calls). The Captain may also lodge a Protest.

- The referee(s) should be approachable and must offer an explanation based upon the rules, without prolonged discussion.
- COACHES are not allowed to dispute calls, or to interact with match officials at all. Concerns should be addressed to the event Head Referee if necessary.

### **Warnings and Sanctions:** ALL DELAY AND MISCONDUCT WARNINGS REMAIN IN FORCE THROUGHOUT THE MATCH

- **Any Delay** by a player or coach should result in a Team Delay Warning (*Yellow card on wrist*).
  - Any further delay by any member of that team, throughout the match, results in Delay Penalty. (*Red card on wrist*)
  - *Multiple Delay Penalties may be assessed within a match.*
- **Misconduct** by any player or coach should be managed when possible through **verbal warning(s)**.
  - Referees may offer one **FORMAL WARNING** (Yellow Card) per MATCH to a TEAM (player or coach) guilty of misconduct.
  - Subsequent misconduct by ANY player or coach on that team in that MATCH must be sanctioned by **PENALTY** (Red Card: point and serve to opponent)
- **Rude Conduct** is immediately sanctioned by Penalty (Red Card). *It is not necessary that a Misconduct Warning (Yellow Card) have been issued previously.*
  - Players may receive a maximum of TWO Penalties per player per SET. Further misconduct results in **EXPULSION** for the SET. (Set is **DEFAULTED**)
  - Coaches may receive a maximum of ONE Penalty per SET. Further misconduct results in the coach being **EXPELLED** for the SET. (no further action)
- **Physical aggression** at any time, or **repeated misconduct beyond the limits above**, results in **DISQUALIFICATION** (Red and Yellow Cards held apart)
  - Disqualification of a Player results in that team defaulting the match. Disqualification of a Coach does not involve a penalty point or further consequence.

- **Blocks and play above the net:**
  - Players must contact the ball within their own playing space (follow-through into the opponents playing space after contact is legal).
  - It is always illegal to attack a ball that is completely in the opponents' space.
  - Blockers may contact a ball in the opponents' space after the attack hit, or if in the referee's judgment the attackers are not attempting to play the ball.
  - "Joust" (simultaneous contact above the net) between opponents is legal. Any player may make the next play, as their team's 1st contact.
  - The block contact counts as first team contact; either player may make the 2nd team contact.
  - A player may block a ball in any direction.
  - "Directional" or "snap" blocks are legal unless the ball is caught or thrown. If the blocker clearly catches or throws the ball, the fault must be whistled.
    - As a guideline: the ball may be blocked quickly in one direction, with one motion.
- **Attacks and Tips:**
  - "Open hand tipping" is prohibited. Referees use "illegal attack" (Diagram 9, Signal 21).
  - Knuckles may be used to "poke" the ball, provided that the ball rebounds (is not caught or thrown).
  - Fingertips (including thumb) may be used to "poke" the ball only if those fingertips in contact with the ball are "rigid and together."
  - Attacks with finger action (setting over the net) must be made perpendicular to the shoulders - either directly forward or backward.
- **Net Contact:** It is a fault to contact any part of the net between (and including) the antennas, during the action of playing the ball.
  - The action of playing the ball includes (but is not limited to) takeoff, hit (or attempt), and landing safely, ready for a new action.
- **Play Under the Net, and Interference:**
  - Players may contact any part of the ball until it has passed completely through the plane below the net.
  - There is no centerline. Players may contact any part of the opponents' court as long as they do not interfere with the opponents' next play.
  - A player who interferes with an opponents' ability to make their next play must be called for the fault.
    - Interference is a FAULT that results in a point, not a replay.
    - Note that this is sometimes a delayed call (the referee must wait to see if the opponents are truly hampered in their next action).
    - Incidental contact between opponents does not constitute interference (bump knees, briefly step on toes, etc.).
    - Interference can occur without physical contact (ex: fallen player under net prevents defender covering short).
    - *Point under the net with your index finger, and say "interference."* (This call will generally require explanation.)
- **Pursuit:** Is legal in beach volleyball. Only balls which pass "over or outside" an antenna are eligible to be pursued.
  - A player may pursue the ball by any route, including under the net and/or through the opponents' court.
  - Opponents may not interfere with legal pursuit.
  - The ball must be played back on 2<sup>nd</sup> team contact "over or outside" the same antenna.
  - Third team contact must send the ball legally through the crossing space (between the antennas).
- **Ball Marks:** The ball is "IN" if it lands inside the court, or touches a boundary line. Corner "tie-downs" are not considered boundary lines.
  - If the referee is in doubt of a line call, they should immediately initiate a "ball mark protocol". Players may not insist that a ball mark be reviewed.
    - Players cannot: alter the ball mark (or court boundaries), cross under the net to review a mark, or attempt to influence the decision of the officials.
    - The line-judge(s) may assist as the referee inspects the ball mark.
    - The referee must be careful to inspect the correct ball mark, considering ball trajectory, the effect of raised lines, and possible "splash" of soft sand.
      - ❖ If the referee determines that the line was moved significantly during the rally in question, they should fix the line before judging the result.
- **Ball Handling / Hand Setting:** There are two types of ball handling faults: "Catch Balls" and "Double Contact".
  - The ball must be played with one quick motion.
  - Balls that significantly move downwards while in the hands, or visibly come to rest, are "Catch Ball" faults (aka: "deep dish," "held-ball," or "lift").
  - Clearly distinct and separate contacts of the ball constitute a "Double-Hit."
    - Spin is not a fault ... but spin may be an indication that a "double-contact" fault has occurred.
- **Simultaneous Contact by Teammates:** If teammates touch the ball simultaneously it counts as 2 team contacts. Either player may make the 3<sup>rd</sup> contact.
- **Defense:**
  - It is LEGAL for ANY first-team contact WITHOUT finger action to strike two or more parts of a player during a single attempt to play the ball. Including:
    - Any style of contact: hands or fists together or apart, heels of hands together or apart, tomahawk, etc. (see finger-action below).
    - All plays without finger action, even if the ball is observed to have been clearly double-contacted.
  - First-team-contact WITH finger action should be judged just as any setting contact:
    - The referee should call a double-hit if the player uses finger action and the ball contact is a clear double.
    - **EXCEPTION:** If the double contact was in defense of a "hard-driven attack" then the referee should allow play to continue.
      - ❖ In judging an attack as "hard-driven," the referee must consider the following:
        - ✓ Speed and trajectory of the ball, as well as the distance between the attacker and defender.
        - ✓ The referee must judge the player's action: "reactive" (double allowed) or "intentional" handset (double-contact called).
- **Serve Receive:** In serve receive, a double contact is allowed. If finger action is used, the referee will judge the contact as a set.
  - It is legal to use techniques such as: hands or fists together or apart, heels of hands together or apart, tomahawk, etc.
  - **REMINDER:** It is legal to receive serve "open handed with finger action", but strict hand-setting judgment must be applied to the contact.
- **Outdoor Safety: Players**
  - Stay hydrated. Use sunscreen, as well as clothing and headgear that protects from sun exposure.
  - Be prepared for cold or wet weather as well as for heat and sun! Play usually continues through wind or rain.
- **Outdoor Safety: Tournament directors**
  - Be familiar with "best practices" regarding lightning safety.
  - In the event of high heat index, consider extending timeouts to 2 minutes, and/or adding Technical Time-Outs