



Guidelines and Rules of Play

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FORMAT DIFFERENCES:

DOUBLES AND TRIPLES

- Played on “short court” (16m x 8m)
- Block counts as one of the team’s allowed three ball contacts
- Let serve (ball touching the net during service) is legal

QUADS AND SIXES

- Played on “big court” (18m x 9m)
- Block does NOT count as one of the team’s allowed three ball contact
- Ball cannot touch the net during service

PREPARATION OF THE MATCH, STRUCTURE OF PLAY:

PREPARATION OF THE MATCH

COIN TOSS (or rock-paper-scissors, odds-or-evens, etc.)

- Before the official warm-up, the first referee conducts the coin toss in the presence of the team captains, where appropriate. The winner of the coin toss gets to choose one of the following for the first game:
 - a) the right to serve or receive the service, or;
 - b) the side of the court.
- For the second game in a two-game match, the coin toss loser gets first choice of the above options.
- If there is a third and deciding set, there will be another coin toss.
- Prior to the match, if the teams have previously had another playing court at their disposal, they will have a 3- minute warm-up period at the net; if not, they may have 5 minutes.

SUBSTITUTIONS:

- In the Open or Pro Divisions, once the tournament starts, there are NO substitutions or replacement of players.
- In all other divisions, substitutions (for injury or no-show) are at the sole discretion of the tournament director or technical supervisor.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:

PLAYING AREA

- The playing area includes the playing court and the free zone.
- The free zone is considered any area outside of the playing court that does not interfere with another court. The free zone may be defined by ball stops or other boundaries.
- Players may not enter into another court, even after hitting the ball.

COURT DIMENSIONS

- **SHORT COURT:** The playing court for Doubles and Triples, all divisions, is a rectangle measuring 16m x 8m (52'6" x 26'3").
- **BIG COURT:** The playing court for Quads and Sixes, all divisions, is a rectangle measuring 18m x 9m (59' x 29'6")

HEIGHT OF THE NET

- Net height shall be 8' for Men's doubles, Co-ed, Quads and Junior Boys (16U, 18U).
- Net height shall be 7'4" for Women's doubles, Junior Boys (10U, 12U, 14U) and all Junior Girls' divisions.

BALL

- Wilson is the Official Beach Volleyball brand of the AVP Grass Tour.

PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

- Players may play barefoot or with shoes not consisting of hard/sharp plastic/metal spikes. Soccer turf shoes or trail runners are acceptable.

GAME AND RALLY WINNER:

SET DURATION

- Depending on the event format, sets (games) can be played to 11, 15, 21, or 28 points
- Each set must be won by 2 points; there is no point cap.
- Teams switch sides of the court at the following intervals:
 - 11 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 4
 - 15 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 5
 - 21 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 7
 - 28 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 8

RALLY SCORING

- A POINT is scored after each completed rally, regardless of which team served to begin the rally

SIDE-OUT SCORING

- A POINT is scored when the serving team wins a rally.
- A "SIDE-OUT" is earned when the team receiving serve wins a rally. No point is scored.

A RALLY is the sequence of playing actions from the moment of the service hit by the server until the ball is out of play, or a fault is committed.

- A team wins a rally:

- By successfully landing the ball on the opponent's court;
- When the opponent team commits a fault;
- When the opponent team receives a penalty

FAULT

- A team commits a fault by making a playing action contrary to the rules (or by violating them in some other way). The referees judge the faults and determine the consequences according to the rules:
 - If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is counted;
 - If two or more faults are committed by opponents simultaneously, a DOUBLE FAULT is called and the rally is replayed.

PLAYING ACTIONS - STATES OF PLAY:

BALL IN PLAY

- The rally begins with the referee's whistle or from the service hit when no whistle is used.

BALL OUT OF PLAY

- The rally ends when the ball lands on the court or a playing fault has been committed. Exception: If a player commits a fault, such as touching the net, during the continuation of playing the ball, it is a fault, regardless of when the ball touches the ground.

BALL "IN"

- The ball is "in" when it touches the ground of the playing court including the boundary lines

BALL "OUT"

- The ball is "out" when it:
 - Falls on the ground completely outside the boundary lines (without touching them);
 - Touches an object outside the court, or a person out of play;

- Touches the ropes, posts, or antenna (if being used);
- Crosses completely the vertical plane of the net, totally or even partly outside the net posts during service or the third hit of the team.
- Crosses the net more than once per rally. Ex: An errant pass goes outside the net pole into the opponents “out-of-bounds” playing area. His partner gets to the ball and plays it back to his paying area, outside the net pole and his partner makes an attack hit. There is no fault. If the player in the opponent's paying area brings the ball back inside the pole, over the net, this is a fault.

PLAYING FAULTS:

DEFINITION

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

CONSEQUENCES OF A FAULT

- There is always a penalty for a fault: the opponents of the team committing the fault win the rally.
- If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is counted.
- If two or more faults are committed by the opponents simultaneously, a DOUBLE FAULT is counted, and the rally is replayed.

PLAYING THE BALL

TEAM HITS

- Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 hits before sending the ball into the opposing court.
- Each team must play within its own playing area and the free zone. Team hits include not only intentional hits by the player, but also unintentional contacts with the ball.
- A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively. (For exceptions, see CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT and BLOCK.)
 - When playing in Doubles or Triples Competition: Blocking is counted as a team contact, and any player may make the first contact of the ball after the block.

- When playing Quads or Sixes Competition: Blocking does not constitute a team contact, and any player may make the first contact of the ball after the block.

SIMULTANEOUS CONTACTS

- Two players may touch the ball at the same moment.
- When two teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as two hits except at blocking.
 - When playing Doubles or Triples, if there is a “Collective Block” (two teammates blocking together), when the ball is contacted by both teammates this only counts as one team contact (the first team contact).
- If there are simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net and the ball 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.
 - If simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net lead to a “held ball,” it is NOT considered a fault.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT

- The ball may touch any part of the body.
- The ball must be hit, not caught or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.
- Exceptions:
 - In defensive action of a hard-driven ball. In this case, the ball can be held momentarily with the fingers as *well as double-contacted as long as it is with one action of playing the ball.*
 - If simultaneous contacts by the two opponents leads to a “held ball.”
 - At blocking, consecutive contacts by one or more blockers are authorized, provided that they occur during one action.
- Hand Setting / Finger Action: Plays involving finger action require special attention
 - If the play is defensive and reactive in nature, as in the case of a hard-driven ball, momentarily held or double-contacted balls are not considered faults. This may apply if a block contact was slight and the ball is still a hard-driven attack.
 - If the player decides/intends to employ finger action, as in the case of off-speed attack, defense or setting, the action must be “clean.”

- At the first hit of the team, unless it is played overhand using fingers, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action.

FAULTS AT PLAYING THE BALL

FOUR HITS:

- A team hits the ball four times before returning it across the net.

ASSISTED HIT:

- Within the playing area, 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 or interfere with an opponent, etc.) may be stopped or held back by a teammate.

HELD BALL:

- A player does not hit the ball, unless when in defensive action of a hard-driven ball or when simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net lead to a momentary “held ball.”

DOUBLE CONTACT:

- A player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball touches various parts of his/her body successively. (Exceptions: see CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT and BLOCK.)

BALL AT NET:

BALL CROSSING THE NET

- The ball sent to the opponent’s court must go over the net within the crossing space. The crossing space is the part of the vertical plane of the net limited as follows:
 - Below, by the top of the net
 - At the sides, by the net posts and their imaginary extension
 - Above, by a ceiling or structure (if any)
- The ball that has crossed the vertical plane of the net to the opponent’s free zone outside of the crossing space may be played back within the team hits

provided that the ball, when played back, crosses the vertical plane of the net again **outside** the crossing space on the same side of the court. The opposing team may not prevent such action.

BALL TOUCHING THE NET

- While crossing the net, the ball may touch the net.

BALL IN THE NET

- A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits. If the ball rips the mesh of the net or tears it down, the rally is canceled and replayed.

PLAYER AT THE NET

Each team must play within its own court and playing space. The ball may, however, be retrieved from the free zone.

REACHING BEYOND THE NET

- In blocking, a blocker may touch the ball beyond the net after his/her opponent has performed an attack hit.
- A player is permitted to pass his/her hand beyond the net after his/her attack-hit, provided that his/her contact has been made within his/her own playing space.

PENETRATION INTO THE OPPONENT'S SPACE, COURT AND/OR FREE ZONE

- A player may enter into the opponent's space, court and/or free zone, provided that this does not interfere with the opponent's play.

CONTACT WITH THE NET

- Contact with the net by a player in the action of playing the ball is a fault.
- Incidental contact of the hair is never a fault.
- Once the player has hit the ball, he/she may touch the post, rope or any other object outside the total length of the net provided that this action does not interfere with play.
- When the ball is driven into the net and causes it to touch an opponent, no fault is committed.

PLAYER'S FAULTS AT THE NET

- A player touches the ball, or an opponent, in the opponent's space before the opponent's attack-hit. A player penetrates into the opponent's space, court and/or free zone, interfering with the latter's play.
- A player touches the net during his/her action of playing the ball, or interferes with the play.
- A player's clothing is considered part of the player, so if any clothing contacts the net, it constitutes a net violation or fault.
 - If a player is wearing a hat and the hat contacts the net, it is considered a net fault.
 - If the hat is dislodged during the course of play and comes in contact with the net while dislodged, it is not considered a fault.

SERVICE

DEFINITION

- The service is the act of putting the ball into play by the correct serving player who, positioned in the service zone (anywhere between the sidelines), hits the ball with one hand or arm. The first service of a set is executed by the team determined by the coin toss.

SERVICE ORDER

After the first service in a set, the player to serve is determined as follows:

- When the serving team wins the rally, the player who served before serves again.
- When the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve, and the player who did not serve last time will serve.
- If a player is discovered serving out of order, the service order is corrected immediately with no loss of points. Both teams will continue in their original service order. Excessive misuse of this privilege is unsportsmanlike conduct.

EXECUTION OF THE SERVICE

The server may move freely within the service zone (between the sidelines).

- At the moment of the service hit or take-off for a jump serve, the server must not touch the court (the end line included) nor the ground outside the sideline. His/her foot may not go under the line.
 - After his/her hit, the server may step or land outside the zone, or inside the court.
 - If the line moves because of the sand/grass pushed by the server, it is not considered a fault.
 - The ball shall be hit with one hand or any part of the arm after being tossed or released and before it touches the playing surface.

SERVICE ATTEMPT

Players are only allowed one service attempt or toss.

SCREENING

The server's teammates must not prevent the opponents, through screening, from seeing the server or the path of the ball.

- On an opponent's request, a player must move sideways, bend over or bend down.

SERVING FAULTS AFTER HITTING THE BALL

After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault if the ball:

- Touches a player of the serving team
- Fails to cross the vertical plane of the net
- Goes "out"
- *ONLY in Quads and Sixes: Touches the net ("let serve")*

SERVICE RECEPTION

A serve is never considered a hard-driven ball and therefore the “First Ball Defense” consideration may not be considered in service reception:

- The ball can be double-contacted (hands do not have to be together).
- If the ball is played with any finger action the contact must be clean.

CO-ED COURTESY RULE

In co-ed doubles, Men must serve to the Man’s half of the court. Women may service either side. One missed courtesy serve is allowable per game with no fault. Any subsequent missed courtesy service will be considered a fault and loss of serve.

ATTACK HIT

DEFINITION All actions to direct the ball toward the opponent, except when serving and blocking, are considered attack-hits.

- An attack-hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by the blocker.
- Any player may carry out an attack-hit at any height, provided that his/her contact with the ball has been made within the player’s own playing space.

ATTACK-HIT FAULTS

- A player hits the ball within the playing space of the opposing team.
- A player hits the ball “out.”
- A player completes an attack-hit using an “open-handed tip or dink” directing the ball with the fingers. A player completes an attack-hit on the opponent’s service, when the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
- A player completes an attack-hit using an overhand pass, which has a trajectory not perpendicular to the line of the shoulders, except when setting his or her teammate. Only Open level may “hand-set” over the net.

BLOCK

DEFINITION Blocking is the action of players close to the net, attempting to intercept the ball coming from the opponent, while reaching higher than the net.

HITS BY THE BLOCKER

- The first hit after the block may be executed by any player, including the one who has touched the ball at the block.

BLOCK WITHIN THE OPPONENT'S SPACE

- In blocking, the player may place his/her hands and arms beyond the net provided that his/her action does not interfere with the opponent's play. Thus, it is not permitted to touch the ball beyond the net until the opponent has executed an attack-hit.

BLOCKING CONTACT

- In Doubles / Triples: A blocking contact IS counted as the first team contact. The blocking team will have two more hits after a block contact.
- In Quads / Sixes: A blocking contact is NOT counted as the first team contact. The blocking team will have three more hits after a block contact.
- Consecutive (quick and continuous) contacts may occur by one or more blockers provided that the contacts are made during one action. Blocking contacts may occur with any part of the body, not just the part of the body that is reaching higher than the net.

BLOCKING FAULTS

- The blocker touches the ball in the opponent's space either before or simultaneously with the opponent's attack- hit.
- A player blocks the opponent's service.
- The ball is sent "out" off the block.

TIME-OUTS

DEFINITION A time-out is a regular set interruption and it lasts for 1 minute.

NUMBER OF TIME-OUTS:

- In Rally Point Scoring: Each team is entitled to one time out per set.
 - This time-out is in addition to the Technical Time Out which takes place during the third court switch (combined score of 21 or 24)
- In Side Out Scoring: Each team is entitled to a maximum of two time-outs per set.

REQUESTS FOR TIME-OUT

Time-outs may be requested by the players only when the ball is out of play and before the whistle or service contact, by showing the time-out hand signal. Time-outs may follow one another with no need to resume the set. The players must have authorization from referees to leave the playing area.

IMPROPER REQUESTS

Among others, it is improper to request a time-out:

- During a rally or at the moment of, or after the whistle to serve;
- After having exhausted the authorized time-out.

Any improper request that does not affect or delay the set shall be rejected without any sanction unless repeated in the same set.

DELAYS TO THE SET

TYPES OF DELAY

An improper action of a team that defers the resumption of the set is a delay and includes, among others:

- Prolonging time-outs, after having been instructed to resume the set
- Repeating an improper request in the same game
- Delaying the set (in any way prolonging the regular time between rallies)

SANCTIONS FOR DELAYS

- The first delay by a team in a game is sanctioned with a DELAY WARNING.
- The second and subsequent delays of any type by the same team in the same set constitute a fault and are sanctioned with a DELAY PENALTY and loss of a rally / point to the opponent.

EXCEPTIONAL SET INTERRUPTIONS

INJURY

Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, the referee must stop the set immediately. The rally is then replayed. An injured player is given a maximum of 5 minutes recovery time one time a match.

- If a player is injured and cannot continue after the recovery time:
 - Substitutions are NOT allowed.
 - Doubles: Team forfeits the match. One player cannot continue to compete alone.
 - Triples: Team can complete the match with a minimum of 2 players.
 - Quads - Team complete the match with a minimum of 2 players.
 - Sixes - Team complete the match with a minimum of 2 players.

EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE

If there is an external interference during the game, play must be stopped and the rally replayed.

COURT SWITCHES AND INTERVALS

COURT SWITCHES

Teams switch sides of the court at the following intervals:

- 11 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 4
- 15 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 5
- 21 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 7
- 28 points: teams switch sides of the court when the combined score is a multiple of 8

INTERVALS

- The interval between each set / game lasts a maximum of 3 minutes.
- If the court switch is not made at the proper time, it will take place as soon as the error is noticed.

MISCONDUCT

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

CATEGORIES

- Unsportsmanlike conduct: argumentation, intimidation, etc.
- Rude conduct: acting contrary to good manners or moral principles, expressing contempt
- Offensive conduct: defamatory or insulting words or gestures

- Aggression: physical attack or intended aggression

SANCTIONS

Depending on the degree of the incorrect conduct, according to the judgment of the first referee and the tournament director, the sanctions to be applied are:

- MISCONDUCT WARNING: for unsportsmanlike conduct, no sanction is given but the team member concerned is warned against repetition in the same game.
- MISCONDUCT PENALTY: for rude conduct or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct, the team is sanctioned with the loss of a rally.
- EXPULSION: repeated rude conduct or offensive conduct is sanctioned by expulsion. The team member who is sanctioned with expulsion must leave the playing area immediately the athlete is considered disqualified from the remainder of that specific match.
- DISQUALIFICATION: for aggression, the player must leave the playing area immediately and is disqualified from competing in the remainder of the EVENT.
- DISQUALIFICATION due to aggression does not require a prior sanction.
- An EVENT is defined as the competition the team is currently playing. Events can be either single day or multi-day competitions.
 - If the disqualified player is registered for a different EVENT occurring at the same location / weekend; the disqualified player could compete in a separate event taking place at the same location / weekend.
 - Example: if a player is disqualified while playing Triples on Saturday, that player could come back and compete in Co-Ed Doubles on Sunday.

TEAM FORMAT AFTER EXPULSION OR DISQUALIFICATION:

- If a team member is EXPELLED from a set:
 - Doubles: Team forfeits that set. Expelled player can return for subsequent sets.
 - Triples: Team can complete the set with a minimum of 2 players. Expelled player can return for subsequent sets.
 - Quads - Team can complete the set with a minimum of 2 players. Expelled player(s) can return for subsequent sets.
 - Sixes - Team can complete the set with a minimum of 2 players. Expelled player(s) can return for subsequent sets.
- If a team member is DISQUALIFIED from a match:

- Doubles: Team forfeits the match and the remainder of the event. One player cannot continue to play alone. Disqualified player cannot return for the remainder of the event.
- Triples: Team can complete the event with a minimum of 2 players. Disqualified player cannot return for the remainder of the event.
- Quads - Team can complete the event with a minimum of 2 players. Disqualified player(s) cannot return for the remainder of the event.
- Sixes - Team can complete the event with a minimum of 2 players. Disqualified player(s) cannot return for the remainder of the event.

MISCONDUCT BEFORE AND BETWEEN SETS

Any misconduct occurring before or between sets is sanctioned according to the sanction scale and the sanction is applied in the following set.

Handbook last updated: 3/3/2021