

Below is a summary of the major rule changes and interpretations for the 2009-2010 USA Volleyball season that NECVA players, coaches, and officials will need to adjust to.

If you have any questions, please contact your region's officials chair.

Please note, the language comes from the 2009-2011 USA Volleyball Domestic Competition Regulations (DCR), so the rules will remain the same through 2011. This should provide more stability in the rules over a longer period of time. So don't throw your DCR (rulebook) away at the end of this season! There may be new interpretations from USAV, which will keep you up to date with them.

► Contact with the Net

Changed:

11.3.1: Contact with the net by a player is not a fault, unless it interferes with the play.

Implication:

Gone from last year's rule is the phrase, "Unless made during the action of playing the ball". Also, "Interfering with play" is now defined in the rules (see 11.4.4). Read on...

Changed:

11.4.4: "A player interferes with the opponent's play by (amongst others):

- a. touching the top band of the net or the top 80 cm of the antenna (the portion of the antenna above the top tape of the net) during his/her action of playing the ball, or
- b. taking support from the net simultaneously with playing the ball, or
- c. creating an advantage over the opponent, or
- d. making actions which hinder an opponent's legitimate attempt to play the ball."

Implication: First, take a deep breath and re-read the circumstances that are a net fault. Now, think about some of the situations that should not be called this season and beyond:

A blocker who bodies the net on the way up (or down)

An attacker who follows through and catches the middle of the net with fingers.

A setter recovering the ball from the net who contacts the net, even if it is in the action of playing the ball.

Please, all R2s should THINK about these situations and keep in mind the language of the rule. If the contact doesn't fit the four situations above, it is NOT a net fault.

For some video on the topic, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGCD8wE50lw>.

The clip shows how the fault was called last year (on the left) and how it should be called this season (on the right). If you have any questions, PLEASE contact your regional chairperson.

Changed:

11.3.2: Players may touch the post, ropes, or any other object outside the antennae, including the net itself, provided that it does not interfere with play.

Implication: Similar to 11.3.1, it connects with 11.4.4 to define interfering with play with regard to the equipment outside the antenna..

► Center Line

Changed:

11.2.2.2: To 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.

Implication: Nothing has changed with regard to a player's foot penetrating into the opponent's court – part of the foot must be on/above the line for it to be legal. However,

the change allows any other part of the body above the foot/feet to touch the opponent's court provided it doesn't interfere with play.

► Substitution Procedures

New:

15.10.3a: "The actual request for substitution is the entrance of the substitute player(s) into the substitution zone, ready to play, during a regular interruption."

15.10.3b: "If that is not the case, the substitution is not granted and the team is sanctioned for a delay."

15.10.3c: "The request for substitution is acknowledged and announced by the scorer or second referee, by use of the buzzer or whistle, respectively."

Implication: This is a great rule, but it will require some education of coaches and players. There will be only one way to request a substitution – the entrance of the substitute(s) into the substitution zone, ready to play, during a regular interruption.

Referees cannot whistle until the sub enters the zone, the sub **MUST** make eye contact with the R2 and see the entry signal before entering the court. The second referee's whistle is **NOT** authorization to enter – one of the substitutes **MUST** see the signal. Throughout the season, referees will need to remind teams in the pre-match instructions that the sub must enter the sub zone for the request to be recognized. Referees must be diligent in educating coaches/players that this procedure has changed and that referees will not whistle/acknowledge verbal or hand signal requests from either the coach or the captain.

If a team has multiple subs, there can be no delay between incoming subs. When the first sub is authorized and enters, the next (second) sub must immediately enter the sub zone. If the subsequent sub is not yet near the sub zone ready to enter, the referee should deny the subsequent sub and prepare to resume play (no delay, just deny the request and move on).

The second part of the rule impacts how/when delay sanctions related to the substitution procedure will be assessed – if players enter the court without the authorization to enter signal. If the procedure is not properly followed – after being previously warned, a team's substitute(s) continually enters the court without authorization – a delay sanction is assessed and the sub is denied. Like last year, if the referee whistles for a sub but the request is then withdrawn or the procedure isn't followed, a delay sanction is assessed and the sub is denied.

► Libero Replacements

Changed:

19.3.2.1: Replacements involving the Libero are not counted as regular substitutions. They are unlimited, but there must be a completed rally between two Libero replacements (unless due to injury/illness or there is a forced rotation caused by a penalty). The Libero can only be replaced by the player whom he/she replaced.

Implication: Below, you'll note that there has been a change to the definition of a completed rally – it results in one of the teams being awarded a point and the service. This means if a rally is stopped prematurely (safety issue, ball on the court, external interference, etc), there **CANNOT** be a Libero replacement.

There are exceptions.

- 1) when there is a forced rotation due to a penalty (during a dead-ball, for example) that would place the Libero in the front row, or
- 2) if there is an injury that forces the stoppage of play. In this case, if the Libero was not on the court at the time of the injury, the Libero may replace the injured player.

► Late Libero Replacements

Changed:

19.3.2.3: 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 caution after the end of the rally. Subsequent late replacements shall result in the play being interrupted immediately and the imposition of a delay sanction. The team to serve next will be determined by the result of the delay sanction.

Implication: As in the past, on the first occurrence, the referee will give the team coach/captain a verbal warning if that team's Libero makes a late replacement (i.e. after the whistle but before the service hit). For subsequent late Libero replacements, the referee(s) will stop play immediately and assess a delay sanction. If this is the team's first delay sanction of the match, it will be a delay warning (recorded on the scoresheet). The same team that was serving when the play was stopped will serve after the delay warning is assessed. If the offending team already has a delay warning, a delay penalty is assessed. The opponent will receive a point and the serve.

► **Signing the scoresheet**

Please note: New scorekeeping materials are available at
<http://www.usavolleyball.org/content/index/3001>

Changed:

USAV 25.2.3.3: The second referee is not required to sign the scoresheet(s). For junior competition, the coaches sign the scoresheet(s) after the match to verify the results. For adult competition, the team captains sign the scoresheet(s) after the match to verify the results.

Implication: Both coaches (not just the winning coach) are now required to sign the scoresheet, both non-deciding and deciding, at the end of the match to verify the results. The R1 is still required to sign it as well. Between the R1 and both coaches, plus a review by the scorer and R2, we're hoping to minimize mistakes.

Now, on to other changes that are no less important, but less dramatic...

New:

1.4.4 Libero Replacement Zone

The Libero Replacement Zone is part of the free zone on the side of the team benches, limited by the extension of the attack line up to the end line.

Implication: Clarifies where the Libero exchange must occur – from the extension of attack line to the extension of end line.

New:

USAV Rule 2.6 d: A referee's platform is required. The platform must be on a support and adjustable in height; the referee's eye position shall be approximately 50 cm (19") above the top of the net. It should be constructed so that it presents the least potential hazard for players. Step ladders, jump boxes and other devices not specifically designed as referee platforms shall not be used.

Implication: The rule book now clearly states what tournament directors have been told for some time now – referees need a real referee platform and other alternatives are not acceptable.

Changed:

USAV 4.5.1: ...Casts, even if padded, are forbidden.

Implication: Quite straight forward. By rule, someone wearing a cast may not play. End of discussion.

New:

USAV 4.5.2: If a player's equipment falls to the floor and creates a safety hazard, play is stopped and a delay sanction assessed.

Implication: This clarifies how to handle a safety hazard caused by player equipment.

Changed:

6.1.3: Rally and completed rally. 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. A completed rally is the sequence of playing actions which results in the award of a point.

Implication: This impacts when a Libero replacement may occur (depending on what occurred in the previous rally). There must be a completed rally between Libero replacements. Similarly, after a team makes a substitution request, there must be a completed rally before that team may make a subsequent request for substitution.

Changed:

USAV 8.4.2: A ball, other than a served ball, shall remain in play if it contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects 4.6 m (15') or more above the playing area.

Implication: This clarifies that a served ball that contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects is out of play.

USAV 8.4.2c: A ball, other than a served ball, is out of play and a play over directed...

Implication: This clarifies that a served ball that contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects is out of play.

Changed:

11.4.2: A player interferes with the opponent's play while penetrating into the opponent's space under the net.

Implication: Adds to the list of faults at the net interfering with the opponent's play while penetrating into the opponent's space under the net.

Changed:

11.4.3: A player's foot (feet) penetrates completely into the opponent's court.

Implication: This codifies the new rules for penetrating into the opponent's court.

New:

USAV 12.6.1.2: "It is a serving fault if the service toss touches any obstruction before the service contact."

Implication: Clarifies that a service toss that touches an overhead obstruction is out of play.

New:

USAV 12.6.2: After the ball has been correctly hit, it is a service fault if the ball touches any overhead obstruction.

Implication: This clarifies that a served ball that contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects is out of play.

Changed:

13.2.3: A back-row player may also complete an attack hit from the front zone, if at the moment of the contact part of the ball is lower than the top of the net.

Implication: Clarifies language for attack hits by back-row players in the front zone.

Changed:

14.1.1: Blocking is the action of players close to the net to intercept the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net, regardless of the height of the ball contact. Only front-row players are permitted to complete a block, but at the moment of contact with the ball, part of the body must be higher than the top of the net.

Implication: Blocking actions are clarified to say that it is the position of the player/blocker reaching higher than the net, not the position of the ball when it hits the blocker, which determines a completed block. For example, when the ball contacts a

player reaching higher than the net and near the net (to meet the definition of a blocker) in the knee, it is still considered a block, not a first team hit.

New:

USAV 15.2.2: A time-out before the start of a set is permitted.

Implication: This USAV clarification says a time-out request prior to a set is legal.

Changed:

USAV 17.1.1: If the injured player cannot continue playing within 30 seconds, the player must be replaced by substitution, a legal Libero replacement (if the Libero is not on the court at the time of the injury), or the team must take a legal time-out if the player is to remain in the set.

Implication: Clarifies that a player injured on the court may also be replaced by the Libero (providing the injured player is a back-row player AND the Libero was not on the court at the time of the injury)

New:

USAV 19.1.1: Each team may designate one specialized defensive player (Libero) per set.

Implication: Clarifies that USAV is not following FIVB's allowance of listing two Liberos on the roster.

New:

19.3.2.5: The consequences of an illegal Libero replacement are the same as those for a rotational fault.

Implication: Clarifies what happens in the event of an illegal Libero replacement.

Changed:

USAV 24.3.2.4: The first referee and the second referee decide, whistle and signal the attack hit faults of the Libero and back-row players.

Implication: FIVB is catching up with USAV – this allows both R1 and R2 to whistle faults of the Libero and back-row players – something we have been doing for a number of years in USAV.