



Volleyball Rules of the Game Frequently Asked Questions

You have questions on volleyball rules? Volleyball Canada has answers. For all you curious volleyball fans out there, here are a few answers to your questions...

1- Is it true that a player may use any part of their body to return the ball, even their feet? If so, how do I teach my athletes not kick the ball every time instead of diving?

Indeed, in volleyball, a player may use any part of the body (i.e. including the feet) to play the ball. The reason for this rule is to increase the number of rallies and make the game more exciting to watch. For coaches, the goal is not to teach young athletes to use their feet to play the ball but rather for this to be an "emergency outlet". For instance, if a hard driven ball hits a player on the foot, the ball is considered "in play" and the rally continues. That example illustrates why this rule is in effect. If you watch international volleyball matches, you will rarely see a player use their feet to play the ball because of the fact that a player has little control over the ball in this situation. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the coach or leader to teach discipline in the game by emphasizing the importance of using proper defensive techniques to play the ball.

2- Can a serve be blocked?

This is a common misconception among amateur volleyball players. I believe it goes back to the early eighties where blocking or attacking the serve was introduced to the game of volleyball for the first time. However, this rule was quickly abolished because it was believed that it strengthened the offense immensely, consequently decreasing the number of rallies. Even now, the offensive system in volleyball overpowers the defense, hence one of the reasons why the Libero has recently been introduced. All this to say that it is forbidden to attack or block the ball from an opponent's serve. What is considered an attack hit from a service? Well, when the ball is in the front zone and entirely higher than the top of the net. Now you can go back to your friends and enlighten them on volleyball's history and he'll notice that you were the smart one after all!

3- Why is the FIVB (Fédération Internationale de Volleyball) changing all the rules?

For the past decade now, the philosophy of the FIVB is to increase the profile of volleyball and improve the attractiveness of the sport. Thus, in order to make volleyball one of the most exciting sport to watch, new rule changes have been implemented in the 1999-2000 volleyball season. Of these changes is the new rally point scoring system, Libero player, coaches movement and one toss for serve. These rule changes have not been implemented at all levels (since it is still being tested at differing age categories).

First, by simplifying the scoring system, the lay person is better able to understand and follow the basics of the game. Secondly, the outstanding abilities of the Libero player, defensive specialist, will help make the rallies longer and hence make the game more spectacular and exciting. These changes are all geared towards getting the spectator interested and emotionally involved in the game.

4- Who is the Libero anyway?

The Libero is a specialised defensive player, identified by a different colour uniform, restricted to perform as a back-row player. He/she is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere if at the moment of contact, the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net. The Libero may not serve, block, or attempt to block. Substitutions involving the Libero are not counted as regular ones; they are unlimited and may take place only when the ball is dead and before the whistle for service. For more information, you can refer to Volleyball Canada's 1999-2000 Indoor RuleBook (see Merchandise Boutique).

5- How important is height in volleyball?

Let's be honest about it, height is very important in volleyball because of the presence of the net. Fortunately with the new position of the Libero player it is possible for shorter to play at the top level.