

HOUSE RULES & OFFICIATING HANDBOOK



Gay
Ottawa
Volleyball

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WEDNESDAY LEAGUE INFORMATION

Format

The GOV League plays on Wednesday nights. Teams register in August and play for 29 weeks. It starts on September 27 and goes until December 13, and starts up again on January 10, continuing until May 8.

Teams play other similar-skilled teams in a tiered “ladder” system, where teams move up or move down the ladder based on their results from the previous week.

Gym locations vary based on availability and rotate among different tiers in order to equally distribute access to different courts.

Teams are assigned duties each week for setup (Team A / 1st seed) and takedown (Team B / 2nd seed).

All Team Captains are responsible for reporting match results to the League Coordinator by Friday at 7pm (48 hours after league play). This is to allow the League Coordinator to publish the schedule on Sunday for the following week of play.

If a match result is not reported by this time, that team risks moving down a tier regardless of their actual performance.

Tier System

Tiers are groups of three teams, and share a court for the night. Teams challenge each other in two-set matches.

Sets are played to 25 points. A team must win by two points, up to a maximum of 27 points.

If teams tie after their two sets (scores were the same both sets) then they will play one “Golden Point”. Whoever wins this point will win the split.

The team that places highest after the night moves up a tier the following week, the team that places in the middle stays in the same tier, and the team that places lowest moves down a tier.

When a team is not playing, they will be assigned to help officiate with a first and second referee, two line-judges, and a scorekeeper.

Teams are ranked at the end of the night by:

1. Number of sets won
2. Head-to-head *points-for* minus *points-against* (to break a two-way tie only)
3. Total *points-for* minus total *points-against* (to break a three-way tie, or if a head-to-head is split by the same point difference)
4. If still a tie, the initial rankings at the start of the night prevail

HOUSE RULES

Introduction

All participants must abide by **GOV's Code of Conduct**, found at www.govleague.ca/governance.

Gay Ottawa Volleyball follows the *Official Volleyball Rules 2021-2024* set out by the Fédération internationale de volleyball (FIVB).

The full rules can be found at https://www.fivb.com/en/refereeingandrules/rulesofthegame_vb.

Gay Ottawa Volleyball has also adopted the following House Rules, to facilitate safe, timely and inclusive match play:

GOV House Rules

- **A player may not pursue and play the ball into the adjacent court.** If the ball crosses the centre line dividing two neighbouring courts, the ball is considered out of bounds. A player may cross past the centre after contacting the ball, so long as the ball had not crossed first. The referee

may need to use their judgment when making these calls, and should err on the side of safety.

- Depending on the facility, teams may permit **a step on or over the service line during serve**. This may be when there is not sufficient space behind the service line to allow for a reasonable approach.
- **Spare players**. Spare players are permitted but must register online in order to accept the liability waiver and code of conduct. A spare player may play for more than one team on the same night. If they are really stuck, teams are permitted to borrow a player from the team that is sitting.
- **Short-handed teams**. A team may play short-handed with five players on the court. A team may never play with fewer than five players. Short-handed teams are subject to the **Ghost Rule**.
- **Ghost Rule**. When the ghost rule is in effect, 1 spot is designated as the spot for the “ghost player.” This is the space where the missing player would stand if they were present. The ghost rule is enforced in order to keep rotation matchups consistent on both sides of the court.
 - When the ghost player rotates to the serving position, the team will automatically lose their serve (as if the ghost missed their serve), and the other team is awarded a point and serves.
 - The “ghost” does not have to be rotated through the playing positions. Teams may play with 3 players in the front row and 2 players in the back row at all times.
 - Players arriving late may automatically take over the ghost position (but not during a rally).
- **Set Default**. A team will default the first set if at the scheduled start time they have fewer than five players on the court. The second set is defaulted 15 minutes after the scheduled start time. Especially on nights when there is

bad weather, officials may be lenient in applying this rule. A defaulted set is considered as a 25-0 result.

- **Time caps.** Time caps may be applied in order to ensure that matches start and end on time. The referee (with help from their team) is responsible for watching the clock and calling time caps. The referee should announce the possibility of a time cap at least 5 minutes before the time cap time.
 - A soft time cap may be applied to the first or second match of the night, and is meant to finish a match early in order for the next match to start on time.
 - A hard time cap applies to the last match of the night, when we are approaching the limit of how late we can use the gym.
- When a **soft time cap** is reached, take the score of the currently leading team and set a cap at 5 points higher than that score, rather than let the set play to 25. The first team to reach that point wins the set (no win-by-two). This rule may not be used to extend a set past the standard 25-point win, or the 27-point cap.
 - Example #1: The soft time cap is reached with the score 18-17. The set is then played to 23 points.
 - Example #2: The soft time cap is reached with the score 21-16. The set is played as usual to 25 points, but the win-by-two point cap is 26 points rather than 27 points.
- When a **hard time cap** is reached, play continues to the end of the point in play. The team in the lead at the end of that point is declared the winner.
- **Time outs.** Each team is permitted one 30-second time out per set. Only the captain may request a time out from the 1st or 2nd referee. The referee should blow their whistle at 20 seconds to end the time out, and beckon for serve at 30 seconds.

- **Injury time outs.** An injury time out is 3 minutes and does not count as a regular time out. However, referees should use their judgment and allow as much time as possible for the player to safely leave the court.
 - If an injury results in blood on the court, the court surface must be cleaned before play can continue.
 - If the injured player cannot continue and there is no substitute, a team can finish the night with the remaining players without penalty. This only applies if the players sustained the injury during play on that same night.

OFFICIATING GUIDELINES

General Principles for Referees

- Call only what you see. Avoid making hasty or “automatic” calls by anticipating a violation before it happens.
- Seek support from your 2nd Referee and Line Judges to verify calls
- If you are unsure about a call, or think you might have made a mistake, simply call a re-serve.
- Ref to the level of play, but be consistent.
- Officiate the match, but do not dominate the match. Maintain a reasonable pace for the match, and try to avoid interrupting the flow of the match with ball handling calls and technicalities.
- Communicate with captains before the match to avoid any issues. Review court limitations or time constraints, if applicable.
- Only the floor captain can speak with you to clarify a call.
- Maintain neutrality during the match, do not become emotionally involved or chat with or congratulate players.

General Principles for Captains

- Captains should identify themselves to the referee before match start
- Only the floor captain can speak with the referee to clarify a call
- If the referee makes a call that you disagree with, ask for clarification respectfully and courteously
- If a referee sticks to their decisions, accept the call graciously and encourage your team to continue play

- If you really feel that you need to clarify a rule with the referee, buy them a drink after and discuss it then, rather than delay a match.

General Principles for Players

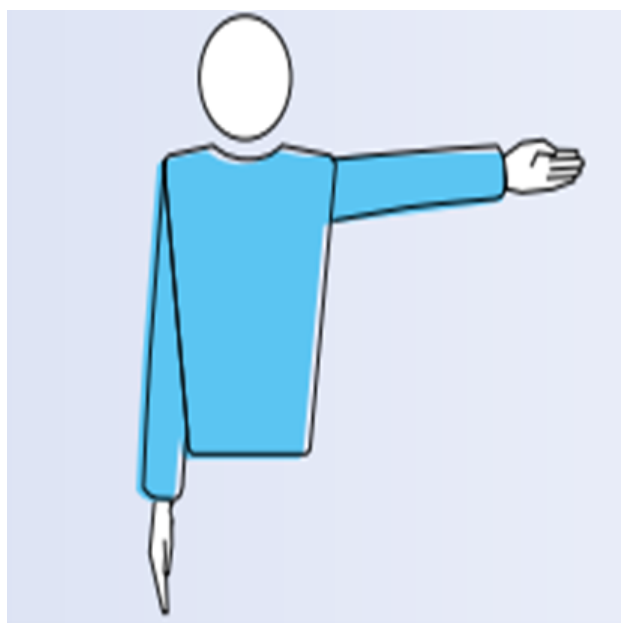
- Treat refs courteously, they are fellow players and not professionals.
- Help officials out! If you know you've made a violation that the ref did not see, fess up and let them know. This isn't the Olympics!
- Only the floor captain can speak to the referee to clarify a call.

Officiating Squad – Roles and Responsibilities

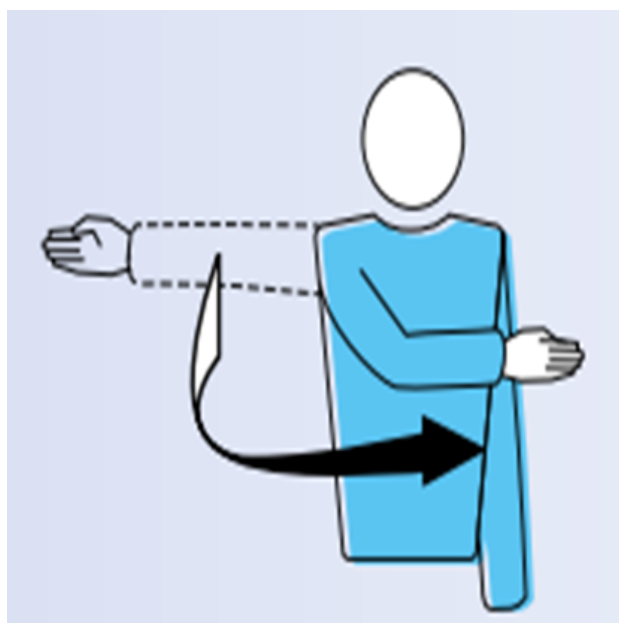
- **1st Referee.** The 1st Ref is the head official, and responsible for:
 - Before the start of the match, checking the court for safety and equipment, controlling start and warm-up times, and meeting the captains;
 - Starting and ending each rally with their whistle (to end a rally, the 1st referee should Whistle, signal which Side gets the point, then signal to indicate the Fault that resulted in a point;
 - Calling ball-handling errors, serve-related actions, a replay or double fault, reaching beyond the net, or assigning sanctions;
 - During a play at the net, watching the attacker's side.
- **2nd Referee.** The 2nd Ref supports the 1st Ref and should also have a whistle. They stand on the court opposite the 1st Ref on the other side of the net. They focus on:
 - Net violations;
 - Line violations;
 - Ball in/out/touch;
 - Rotation/position faults; and,
 - The defender's (blocker's) side, during plays at the net.
- **Line Judges.** Line Judges stand a few steps from the corners of the court, to the right hand side of the 1st and 2nd Ref. Line judges:
 - Help make in/out calls;
 - Help call foot faults (during serve); and,

- Help call touches off the block or dig.
- **Scorekeeper.** The scorekeeper watches the game and keeps up on calls to ensure the score is recorded correctly. The scorekeeper also:
 - Makes note of the final score of each set;
 - Keeps an eye on the time and advises the 1st Ref if the match is approaching a time cap; and,
 - Helps apply the Ghost Rule if applicable.

Hand Signals



Team to serve



Invitation to serve





Ball in



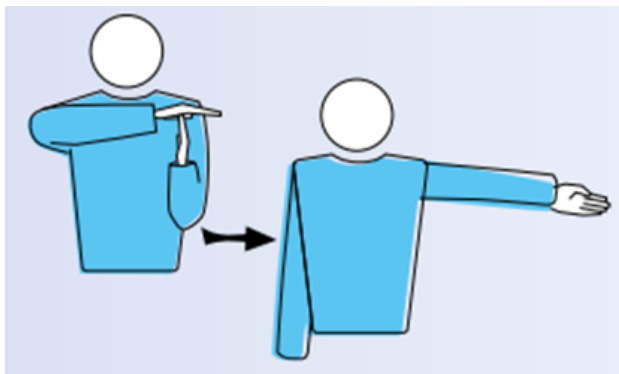
Ball out



Replay or Double Fault



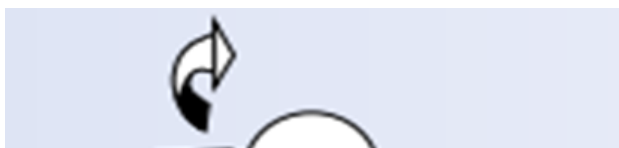
Substitution



Time out

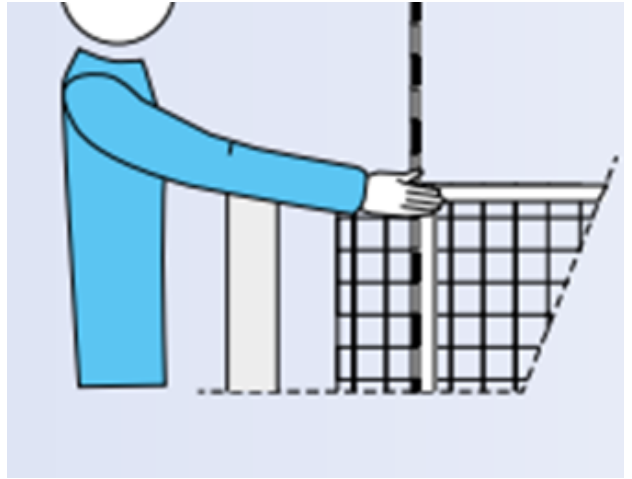


Calling captains (lol)

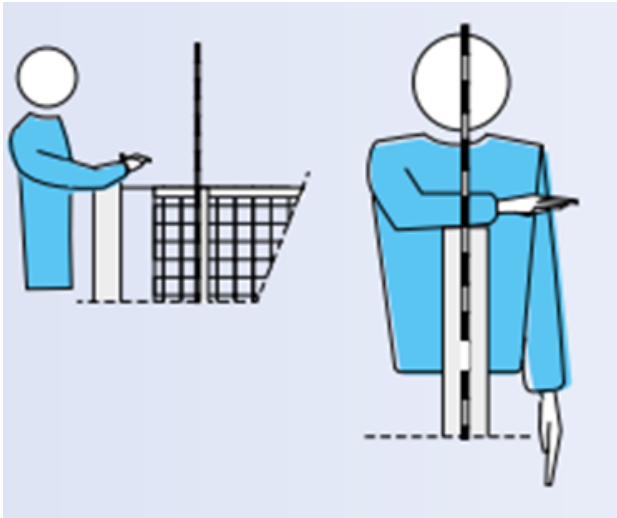




Ball Touched



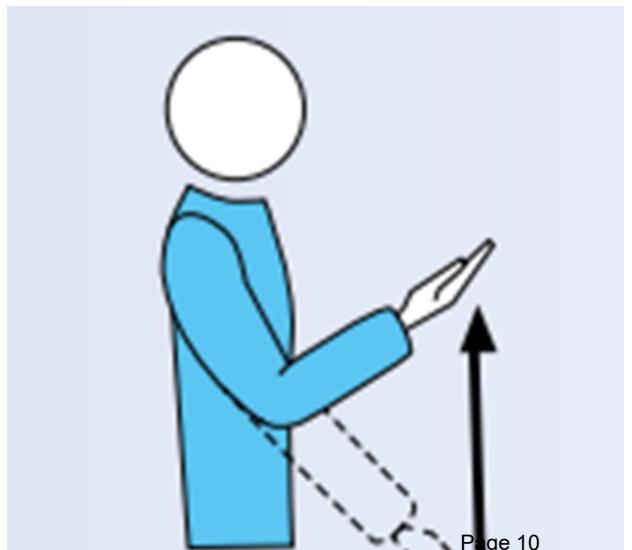
Net touched by player

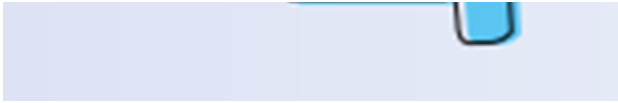


Reaching behind the net



Four contacts





Double contact



Lift/Carry/Catch



Line violation



Position/rotational fault

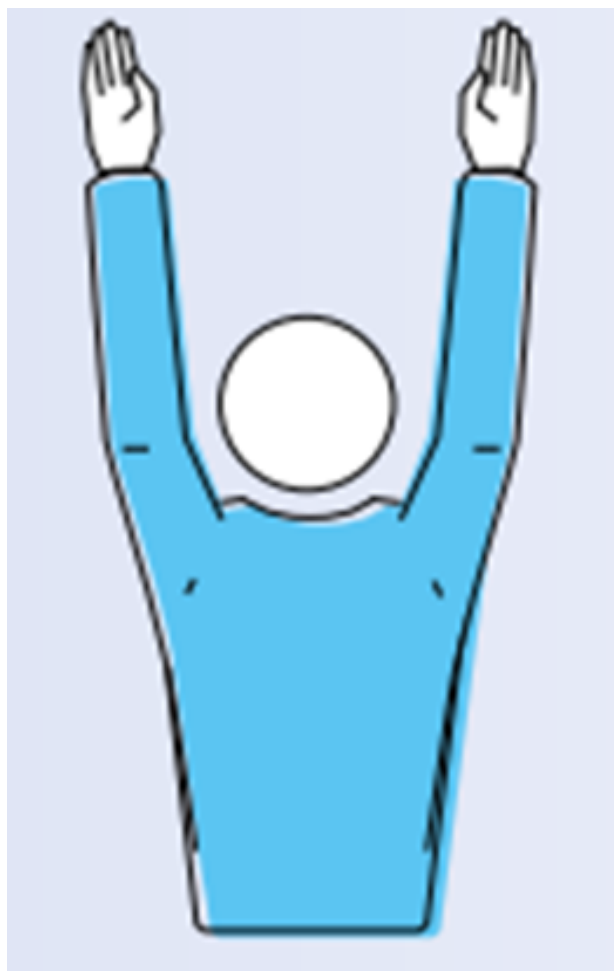


Delay of serve (8 seconds)

End of set/match



Attack fault (back row or libero)



Screening or illegal block

Clarifications on Commonly Difficult Calls

Ball Handling Errors – Double Contacts and Lifts

A **double contact** is when a player hits the ball twice in succession, or the ball contacts various parts of their body in succession. A **lift** is when the ball is caught and/or thrown.

It is important to ref consistently with the skill level of each team. If teams are doubling 80% of the time, referees can use their judgment to be more lenient in

order to promote play. However, it is imperative to be consistent in making calls throughout the entire match.

Tip: a lift can be characterized as “over-control” of the ball. This is when the ball stays in a player’s hand(s) for too long. A double contact can be characterized as “under-control” of the ball.

Note: The fact that the ball is spinning after a volley does not necessarily mean there was a double contact.

The *FIVB Refereeing Guidelines and Instructions* also elaborate on the extent of referee discretion when calling double contact faults: when a player is not in a very good position to play the ball, the 1st referee will be **less severe** in their judgment of ball handling faults. For example:

- The setter running to play the ball, or forced to make a very quick action to reach the ball in order to set; or
- The players are forced to run or make very quick actions to play a ball after it has rebounded from the block or from another player.

Double Contact Exception – First Team Contact

For the first team contact of the ball (i.e. on serve reception and during the rally), the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action. A lift (also known as a carry, catch, or throw) is **never** permitted.

Net Violations

A player may not touch any part of the net inside the antennas while in the act of playing the ball (take-off, hit or hit attempt, landing)

It is acceptable for a player to touch the net, if they are not in the act of playing the ball and do not interfere with play. Interfering with play includes:

- Using the net as a support or stabilizing aid;
- Creating an unfair advantage over the opponent by touching the net;
- Actions that hinder an opponent’s legitimate attempt to play the ball;

- Catching or holding onto the net.

When watching for net violations:

- The first (up) referee should watch the attacker's side
- The second (down) referee should watch the defender's side

Reaching Beyond the Net

A blocker may touch the ball beyond the net provided that they do not interfere with the opponent's to play the ball.

When the ball has crossed the vertical plane of the net totally or partially, the receiving team may play the ball.

After an attack hit, a defending player is permitted to pass their hands beyond the net, if the contact is made within their own playing space.

If the ball goes out after a joust (when two opponents touch the ball simultaneously over the net), it is the fault of the team on the opposite side of where the ball landed out.

Centre Line Violations

Unlike the service and attack line, a player's foot (or other body part) may touch or partially cross the centre line, **provided that the action does not interfere with an opponent's play**.

However, safety first! If a player is consistently partially crossing the centre line, the referee may choose to issue a warning. This is to reduce the chance of collisions that can cause an injury.

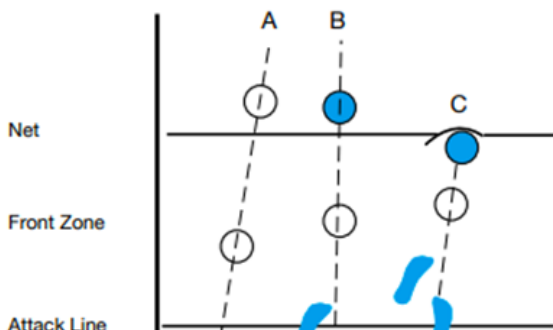




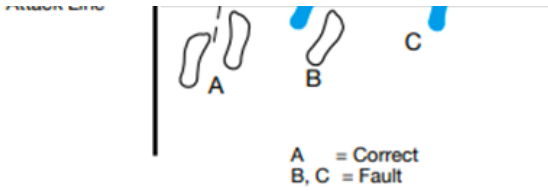
Attack and Service Line Violations

For the Service Line and the Attack Line (during a back row attack), with the centre line, the foot or other body part **may not** touch the line at all, let alone cross it.

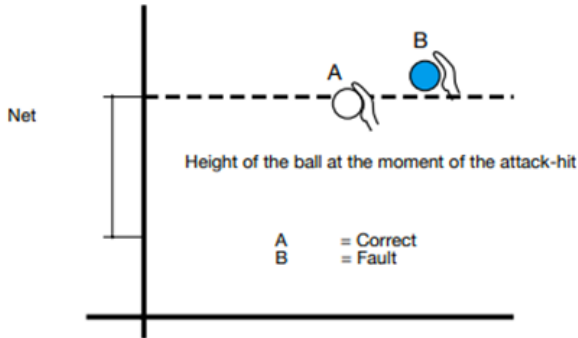
Back Row Attacks



A back-row player may complete an attack hit at any height from behind the attack line, provided that at their take-off, the player's foot (feet) has not touched nor crossed over the



attack line. After their hit, the player may land in front of the attack line.



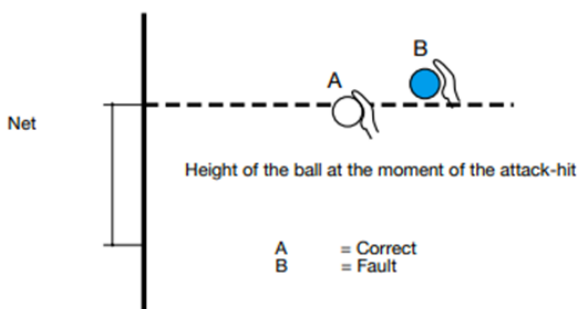
A back-row player may also complete an attack hit from the front zone, if at the moment of the contact a part of the ball is lower than the top of the net.

Back Row Blocks – Violation

Only front-row players may block or attempt to block.

It is only considered a block if at the moment of contact with the ball, a part of the body is higher than the top of the net. If the player contacts the ball below the top of the net, it is not considered a block, but a first team contact.

Attack Hits by the Libero



A libero is a specially designated player, who is allowed to replace any player in a back row position. They are restricted to perform as a back row player and are not allowed to complete an attack hit from



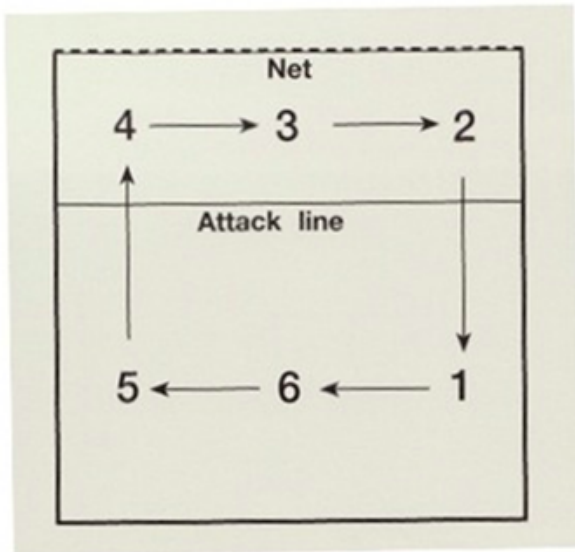
anywhere (including playing court and free zone) if at the moment of the contact the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net.

Sets from the Libero

When the Libero completes an overhand finger pass (i.e. a volley set), while standing in the front zone (standing on, or in front of the attack line), the player contacting the ball next may not complete an attack hit when the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net.

When the Libero completes an overhand finger pass (i.e. a volley set), while standing completely behind the attack line, the ball may be freely attacked.

Positional Faults

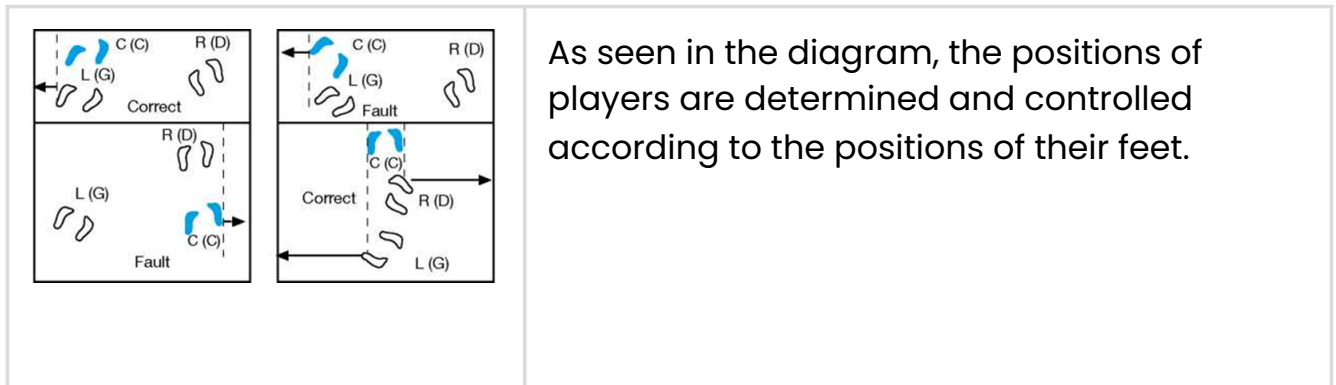


The team commits a positional fault, if any player is not in their correct position at the moment the ball is hit by the server.

To be in the correct position, each back-row player must be positioned further back from the centre line than the corresponding front-row player; and the

front-row players and the back-row players, respectively, must be positioned laterally in the correct order:

- Front Row: positions 4 (front-left), 3 (front-centre), 2 (front-right)
- Back Row: positions 5 (back-left), 6 (back-centre), 1 (back-right)



When calling positional faults, first give a warning if players are overlapping. Please do not call minor overlaps, and do not be petty with calling positional violations.

Additional Resources

In addition to the Official Volleyball Rules 2021-2024, the FIVB has published Refereeing Guidelines and Instructions, and it also maintains a Rules of the Game – Volleyball Casebook.

All of these resources can be found at www.fivb.org.