



AMERICAN VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE | Rules & Guidelines

version 2023.05

approved by Dave Behar, AVL Commissioner

1. AVL PLAYING AREA

1.1 AVL DIMENSIONS

The playing area for the AVL LONG COURT is 59' x 29'6" (18m x 9m) and a surrounding free zone which is a minimum 9'10" (3m) wide.

1.2 AVL PLAYING SURFACE

The surface of the playing area must be as flat and uniform as possible, free of rocks, sprinkler heads and any other objects that may cause injury. Sand courts consist of fine-grained sand and should be at least 12" deep.

1.3 LINES ON THE AVL COURT

Boundary lines consist of two sidelines and two end lines which mark the playing court. They are made of 1/4-3/8" rope or 2-3 1/8" wide flat bands or tape. The center line divides the playing court into two square team courts, but is not marked. All lines are considered to extend indefinitely.

It is the player's responsibility to assure that all lines are in their proper location prior to the start of each play. Lines moved during play do not cause the rally to stop. If it cannot be determined whether a ball lands in bounds or out of bounds, it is a replay.

1.4 AVL SERVICE ZONE

The service zone is behind the end line and between the extension of the sidelines and extends to the end of the free zone.

2. AVL NET AND POSTS

2.1 AVL HEIGHT OF THE NET

The height of the net is 7'11 5/8" (2.43m) for men and 7'4 1/8" (2.24m) for women, measured at the center.

A net failure occurs when there is a sudden loss of net height or tension. If the net failure is the result of a fault or does not affect the outcome of the rally, the rally counts. Otherwise, it is replayed.

3. AVL BALL

3.1 AVL BALL

The AVL ball must be spherical, made of a flexible leather or water-resistant leather-like cover and a rubber or rubber-like bladder. Its circumference must be 25 1/2-26 1/2" and its weight 9-10 oz. It may be of any color or multicolored. Official AVL balls from sponsors may be designated by AVL.

4. AVL TEAMS

4.1 AVL COMPOSITION

Four players on the court per team, with no more than six players on the roster, per gender. All competitions must involve teams with the required numbers of players. Teams with less than the required number of players must forfeit.

Two players may play in non-AVL sanctioned external doubles or quads competitions, however must wear the AVL Team Uniform.

5. AVL EQUIPMENT

5.1 APPROPRIATE AVL OUTFITTING / CLOTHING / UNIFORM

A player's clothing must be presentable and appropriate for the competition. Players on the same team must wear clothing / Uniform of the same colors and designs on the court. Off the Court, AVL Licensed Products must be worn, but does not need to match teammates.

Players may wear league authorized hats, visors, or sunglasses at their own risk. Players may play barefoot, in socks, or in "vooties." Shoes may be worn but they cannot have any type of non-flexible cleats or spikes.

5.2 FORBIDDEN OBJECTS

Players are forbidden to wear any objects that may cause an injury to a player, such as jewelry, pins, bracelets, casts, etc. Players may wear glasses or flat-band rings at their own risk.

6. ***AVL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

6.1 AVL PLAYERS

All participants must know the official American Volleyball League (AVL) Rules & Guidelines – and abide by them.

Participants must behave respectfully and courteously in the spirit of fair play towards the refereeing corps, teammates, opponents and spectators. They must refrain from actions aimed at delaying the game or taking unfair advantage.

Participants must accept referee decisions with sportsmanlike conduct. In case of doubt, clarification may be respectfully requested. A player may question the referee's interpretation of a rule, but not the referee's judgment.

6.2 AVL PLAYER BEHAVIOR

Players must not persistently address officials in regard to their decisions.

Players must not make derogatory remarks about or to an official, opponents, or spectators.

Player must refrain from the use of profanity.

Players must not commit acts with the intention of influencing the referee decisions.

Players must refrain from intentionally trying to distract an opponent who is playing or about to play the ball (i.e. shouting, clapping, etc.).

Players should not take any action tending to influence the referee judgment concerning ball handling.

Players may not commit any act, which, in the opinion of the referee, delays the game unnecessarily.

Players must refrain from kicking or hitting the ball out the area of play.

Players must not intentionally damage AVL equipment.

Physical assault or intimidation of officials, opponents or spectators by players is prohibited. (see "Misconduct", Article 22)

6.3 COACHING

(Verbal) Coaching is only permitted during a timeout. Hand signals or gestures are allowable during a game or match.

Coaching is allowed between games and during time outs.

7. **SCORING SYSTEM**

7.1 TO WIN A MATCH

Matches may either consist of a single game, or best 2 out of 3 games. A team wins a match by winning one or two games, respectively.

7.2 TO WIN AN AVL GAME

One game match: 25 points, win by 2, 30 point cap, otherwise a Tie

1st or 2nd game in 2 out of 3: 11 points, win by 2, 13 point cap.

Deciding game in Game 3 of 2 out of 3: 11 points, win by 1, 11-10 wins.

The AVL Tournament Director may change game points or caps.

7.3 TO WIN AN AVL RALLY

Whenever a team fails to serve or return the ball, or commits any other fault, the opposing team wins the rally.

If the serving team wins a rally, it scores a point and continues to serve.

Due to side-out play only the serving team scores points

7.4 DEFAULT AND INCOMPLETE AVL TEAM

A team declared incomplete for the game or match loses the game or match. The opposing team is given the points, or points and the games needed to win the game(s) or match.

7.5 FORFEIT – AVL Pool Play Only

If any team forfeits a match, all games that they have played, or will play, are scored "0".

7.6 AVL POOL PLAY PROCEDURES

1. Seed all teams
2. Determine how many teams will be in each pool
3. Place teams in pool using seeding chart

PLAYOFF PROCEDURES:

1. The top qualifiers out of each pool advance to the playoffs.
2. Advancing teams are determined by:
 - a. Win-loss record
 - b. Head-to-head
 - c. Point differential only among teams that are tied
 - d. After initial tie is broken, go back to head-to-head if remaining teams are still tied.
 - e. Point differential among all teams in the pool
 - f. Coin toss
3. Teams will be seeded in AVL (Championship) Playoffs according to the original seedings.

(There will not be a re-seeding of playoff teams following pool play).

Exception: At the AVL Tournament Director's discretion Coed and All Star tournaments ONLY may be reseeded following pool play. Playoff teams will be placed in a fill in bracket. Amount of teams to move into playoffs is at the discretion of the AVL Tournament Director.

Example: Winner of Pool #1 will be 1st seed. Winner of Pool #2 will be 2nd seed (See seeding playoff charts)

4. First and Second Place teams should always be cross-bracketed

Example: 1st place team in pool #1 would go in the top bracket and 2nd place team in pool #1 would go in the bottom bracket.

POOL PLAY FORMAT:

4 teams- 1 game to 28, no cap with a 3rd game to 15 if needed, no cap, all switch at 7 (caps may be used at the Tournament Director's discretion)

8. PREPARATION OF THE MATCH

8.1 COIN TOSS

Before the first game and before each deciding game, the referee conducts a coin toss in the presence of the team captains. The winner of the coin toss chooses either:

to select to serve or receive service of the first ball or the side of the court on which to start the game.

The loser takes the remaining alternative and, for the second game in a 2 out of 3 match, gets to select from the above choices.

8.2 If a third game is required a re-toss of the coin will be done.

8.3 Any other alternate means may be used as long as agreed to by both teams.

9. AVL TEAM LINE-UP

9.1 SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions or replacements of roster players by roster players are allowed at any time.

10. STATES OF PLAY

10.1 BALL "IN PLAY"

The ball is in play from the service contact until the ball is out of play.

10.2 BALL "OUT OF PLAY"

The ball is out of play from the moment the ball lands or a fault is committed. The rally ends when a referee halts play or the ball is out of play.

10.3 BALL "IN" (OR "IN BOUNDS")

A ball is in when its first contact with the ground is on the playing court or a boundary line.

10.4 BALL "OUT" (OR "OUT OF BOUNDS")

The ball is out when:

Its first contact with the ground is completely outside the playing court, or it does not touch the boundary line.

It completely crosses the net outside the posts for the long court; or antennas for the short courts, or under the net after the attacking team's third contact.

It touches an object out of play.

It passes over the imaginary extension of the posts (Long Court) or antenna

If the boundary line is accidentally moved, the referee will decide whether the ball is in or out by judging where the line should have been.

11. PLAYING FAULTS

11.1 DEFINITION

Any playing action contrary to the rules is a fault.

If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is counted, except when the first fault is the ball contacting the ground and the second fault occurs during the continuation of the play. If two or more faults are committed by two opponents simultaneously, the rally is replayed.

12. PLAYING THE BALL

12.1 TEAM CONTACTS

Each team is entitled to a maximum of three contacts to return the ball to the opponents. A player may not contact the ball two times consecutively except during or after blocking or when digging a hard driven ball. Blocking does constitute a team contact and any player may make the first contact of the ball after the block.

12.2 SIMULTANEOUS CONTACTS

If two opponents simultaneously and instantaneously contact the ball over the net, the ball remains in play and the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits. If such a ball lands out of bounds, it is the fault of the team on the opposite side of the net from where the ball lands.

A joust occurs when players of opposing teams cause the ball to come to rest above the net through simultaneous contact. A joust is not a fault and play continues as if the contact was instantaneous.

12.3 ASSISTED HIT

A player is not permitted to take support from a teammate or any object in order to reach the ball. However, a player who is about to commit a fault may be stopped or held back by a teammate.

12.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTACT

A player may touch the ball with any part of the body.

A player may have successive contacts with a hard driven ball.

The ball must be contacted cleanly and not held (including lifted, pushed, caught, carried or thrown). The ball cannot roll or come to rest on any part of a player's body.

An exception is allowed during the defensive play of a hard-driven ball, which is an attack-hit or blocked ball traveling at a high rate of speed (as judged by the referee). In that case, the ball may be momentarily lifted or pushed, providing that the attempt is one continuous motion.

A contact of the ball with two hands, using the fingers to direct the ball, is a set. A player may set the ball in any direction towards his/her team's court, provided that the ball is contacted simultaneously by both hands and does not visibly come to rest.

Rotation of the ball after the set may indicate a held ball or multiple contacts during the set, but in itself is not a fault.

A legal set directed towards a teammate that unintentionally crosses the net is not a fault.

If the ball is intentionally set into the opponent's court, the player must contact the ball above his/her shoulders and must direct the ball perpendicular to the direction his/her shoulders are facing.

When contacting the ball with one hand, it must be cleanly hit with the heel or palm of the hand (a "roll shot"), with straight, locked fingertips (a "cobra"), knurled fingers (a "camel toe") or the back of the hand from the wrist to the knuckles. One-handed placement or redirection of the ball with the fingers (a "dink" or "open hand tip") is a fault.

It is a double hit fault while playing the ball (other than a hard driven ball), to have it also hit the hat being worn.

If the ball touches a player's hair, it is considered a contact.

13. BALL AT THE NET

13.1 BALL CROSSING THE NET

A ball directed to the opponent's court must go over the net and fully within the poles or antennas

13.2 BALL TOUCHING THE NET

The ball may touch the net while crossing the net, except during the service.

A serve that touches the net is a fault.

13.3 BALL IN THE NET

A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three-team contacts.

A ball may be played off the net between the antennas.

A ball may NOT be played off the net if it touches, or is outside the antennas.

13.4 BALL TOUCHING THE POSTS OR ANTENNAS

A ball touching the posts or hardware inside the posts is a fault.

A ball touching the antenna is a fault.

14. PLAYER AT THE NET

14.1 REACHING BEYOND THE NET

While blocking, a player may touch the ball beyond the net, provided they do not interfere with the opponent's play, before or during the attack-hit.

A player is permitted to pass his/her hand(s) beyond the net after an attack-hit, provided that the contact was made within his/her team's playing space.

Within the limits of the three-team contacts, a player may contact a ball that has crossed the net below the net (or outside the posts) in an attempt to recover a ball that has not been contacted by the opponents. The recovered ball must cross the net below the net (or outside the posts).

14.2 PENETRATION INTO OPPONENT'S PLAYING AREA

Players may partially or completely cross the center line below the net or outside the poles, either before, during or after a legal play of the ball, provided that this does not interfere with the opponent's play. Incidental contact with an opponent is ignored, unless such contact interferes with the opponent's opportunity to play the ball. While opposing players are not required to avoid the ball or the player, they cannot intentionally interfere with any legal attempt to play the ball on their court.

If a player crosses the centerline and interferes with an opponent during the continuation of a play, it is a fault.

14.3 CONTACT WITH THE NET OR POSTS

It is a fault for a player to net when their momentum causes them to touch the net, even after the ball hits the ground. (This is considered continuation of play).

Exceptions are:

Incidental contact of the net by a player's hair

If a player's hat, visor, or glasses fall off during play and then contacts the net

When a ball is driven into the net and causes the net to touch a player, no fault is committed. Once a player has contacted the ball, the player may touch the posts, ropes or any other object outside the total length of the net, provided that it does not interfere with play.

15. SERVICE

15.1 DEFINITION

The service (or serve) is the act of putting the ball into play by the serving player in the service zone.

15.2 SERVICE ORDER

If the serving team wins the rally or a replay is directed, the player who served the previous rally serves again. If the serving team loses the rally, the next server on the receiving team serves the ball.

If a player is discovered serving out of order, after the ball is dead, that player continues to serve with no loss of points. The opposing team remains in their service order, but the offending team will reverse their original order of service to ensure that no player will serve three consecutive terms of service. Excessive misuse of this privilege is un-sportsman like conduct.

15.3 AUTHORIZATION OF SERVICE

It is the responsibility of the server to assure that both teams are ready for service. A player on the receiving team may stop play when not ready for a service as long as no attempt to play the ball is made. In this case, the rally is canceled and replayed. Misuse of this privilege is unsportsmanlike conduct.

15.4 EXECUTION OF SERVICE

The server may move freely behind the end line. At the moment of the service or take-off for service, the server must not touch the ground outside the service zone. The player's foot may not go under a boundary line. If the end line is moved by the server, it is a fault. After the service contact, the player may land on the court or outside the service zone.

The server contacts the ball after clearly tossing or releasing the ball and before the ball touches the playing surface.

15.5 SERVICE ATTEMPT

The server may only have one attempt to serve the ball.

15.6 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.

15.7 NET SERVE

Net serve is a fault if the ball touches the net in the AVL Long Court.

15.8 It is a fault to double contact the reception of a serve.

15.9 If during reception of a serve, a player attempts to receive serve in an open handed setting motion, it is a fault and the serving team wins the point.

16. ATTACK-HIT

16.1 DEFINITION

All actions to purposely direct the ball towards the opponent's playing area, except in the act of serving and blocking, are considered to be attack-hits. An attack-hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by a blocker.

16.2 ATTACK-HIT FAULTS

It is a fault when a player completes an attack hit above the plane of the net on the opponent's service.

17. BLOCK

17.1 DEFINITION

Blocking is the action of player(s) close to the net to deflect the attacked ball coming from the opponent by reaching above the height of the net.

17.2 HITS BY THE BLOCKER

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

17.3 BLOCK WITHIN THE OPPONENT'S SPACE

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

17.4 BLOCKING CONTACT

A blocking contact is counted as a team hit. The blocking team will have two hits after a blocking contact. Consecutive, quick and continuous contacts may occur by one or more blockers, provided that these contacts are made during one blocking action.

There are no restrictions on which players may participate in a block
The blocker may break their wrists to direct a ball as long as it is quick, in one direction, and with one motion.

17.5 BLOCK FAULTS

It is a fault for the blocker to reach over the net and touch a ball that is being set by an opponent.

It is a fault for the blocker to contact the ball for a prolonged period.

18. TIME-OUTS

18.1 DEFINITION

A timeout is a regular game interruption. It lasts for 1 minute. Each team is entitled to one timeout per game. Successive timeouts may be requested without resumption of the game. Tie games at 25 are entitled to a second time-out

Injury timeout is 5 minutes.

19. DELAYS TO THE GAME

19.1 DEFINITION

A delay is an improper action of a team that defers resumption of the game and includes:

Prolonging time-outs, after having been instructed to resume the game;

Repeating an improper request in the same game

19.2 SANCTIONS FOR DELAYS

The first delay by a team in a game is sanctioned with a delay warning. The second and any subsequent delay of any type by the same team in the same game constitutes a fault and is sanctioned with a delay penalty, which is the loss of a rally.

20. ***EXCEPTIONAL GAME INTERRUPTIONS***

20.1 INJURY

If an injury occurs as the result of a fault or does not affect the outcome of the rally, the rally counts. Otherwise, the rally is immediately canceled and replayed. An injured player is given a five-minute injury time-out.

20.2 EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE

If external interference does not affect the outcome of play, the rally counts. Otherwise, the rally is immediately canceled and replayed. A shouted warning (such as "Ball on!") is sufficient to affect the outcome of play, provided that a player had a chance to make a legal play of the ball. Misuse of this privilege is unsportsmanlike conduct. A ball that is rolling near the court is not necessarily interference with play. The referee will make a final determination if a "ball on" call is disputed.

21. ***COURT SWITCHES***

21.1 COURT SWITCHES

Court switches are team exchanges of playing courts that occur at specified times during a game:

25-point games, when the total number of points is a multiple of five.

15-point games, when the total number of points is a multiple of four.

22. ***MISCONDUCT***

22.1 CATEGORIES

Incorrect conduct by a team member towards officials, opponents, teammates or spectators is classified in four categories according to the degree of the offense:

Unsportsmanlike conduct: arguing, intimidating, taking unfair or inappropriate advantage of player privileges, etc.

Rude conduct: acting contrary to good manners or moral principles, interfering with an opponent's ability to play, expressing contempt.

Offensive conduct: defamatory or insulting words or gestures.

Aggression: physical attack or intended aggression.

22.2 SANCTIONS

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

Misconduct warning: For unsportsmanlike conduct, no penalty is given but the team member concerned is warned against repetition in the same game.

Misconduct penalty: For rude conduct, the team is penalized with the loss of one rally.

Expulsion: Repeated rude conduct is sanctioned by expulsion and the player must leave the playing area for the remainder of the game.

Disqualification: for offensive conduct and aggression, the player is sanctioned by disqualification and must leave the playing area for the remainder of the match. Disqualified players may be subject to further sanctions by the AVL Tournament Director.

Expulsion and/or disqualification will be the responsibility of the Tournament Director.

22.3 SANCTION SCALE

Repetition of misconduct by the same person in the same game is sanctioned progressively. Disqualification due to offensive conduct or aggression does not require a previous sanction.

22.4 MISCONDUCT BEFORE AND BETWEEN GAMES

Any misconduct occurring before or between games is sanctioned and the sanction(s) apply in the following game.

23. AVL REFEREEING

23.1 PROCEDURES

Referees **MUST** position themselves at the base of one of the poles or up to 5' back.

The referee shall be responsible for starting all games in a timely fashion.

The referee shall get up to look at ball marks to help with in/out ball decisions, if called for.

The players have the responsibility to make "honor" calls on themselves in regard to a net touch or a touch while blocking the ball. The referee should also make these calls.

The referee shall be responsible for keeping the score of the game.

The referee shall properly record the information on the pool sheet (if pool play). This includes updating the standings and recording the score. If the tournament is double elimination, the referee shall report the score to the Tournament Director.

24. AVL REFEREES

24.1 AUTHORITY

The AVL referee has the authority to make all calls during the match. Players may not protest referee's judgment calls. Players may request a rules interpretation by the Tournament Director.

25. AVL TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

25.1 AUTHORITY

The Tournament Director has the authority to alter rules and make decisions not covered in the rules.

If the Tournament Director does alter the rules, the Tournament Director must advise the participants of those changes prior to the start of the event if possible.

The Tournament Director has absolute authority over players, game officials and spectators, on and off the court at a tournament, where the maintenance of order is concerned, and may impose disciplinary measures as needed.

The Tournament Director has the authority to make any necessary decisions regarding entries and seeding.

The Tournament Director may change the format of the tournament if, in his opinion, conditions warrant it (i.e. loser's games played to 11 point because of limited daylight).

The Tournament Director has the authority to settle any and all disputes.

The Tournament Director is the sole authority who determines if weather conditions warrant a suspension or cancellation of play.

The Tournament Director is the final authority in determining if courts are safe and playable.

The Tournament Director shall assign the players to referee matches. Normally seeded players with a bye or next up on court will be assigned to start refereeing. After the first round, losers have the responsibility to referee the following match.

Players not completing their refereeing assignments will be reported to all other Tournament Directors. Players not completing their refereeing assignments may lose their right to play in all CBVA events.

26. AVL COURT LINES

26.1 AVL PLAYING AREA COURT LINES

Attack lines are marked 9'10" (3m) from the centerline.

26.2 AVL TEAM COMPOSITION

Four-person: 4 players on the court per team, no more than 6 on the roster

All competitions must involve teams with the required numbers of players. Teams with fewer than the required number of players must forfeit.

Mixed teams are composed of male and female players competing on a men's height net. Coed teams must contain equal numbers of males and females on each team,

26.3 AVL TEAM SUBSTITUTIONS

Unlimited substitutions are allowed as long as one player does not occupy more than one position in the service order during a single game.

If a player becomes injured and no legal substitute is available for that position in the service order, a player on the roster not playing at the time of the injury may enter the game as an exceptional substitution for the injured player. This substitute may not be replaced for the remainder of the game unless he/she also becomes

injured. If no team members are available to make a legal or exceptional substitution, an injury time-out may be granted in accordance with rule 20.1.

26.4 AVL PLAYERS' POSITIONS

Players are free to position themselves anywhere within their court. There are no positional faults.

26.5 BLOCKING

When a ball is blocked back into an attacking player, the attacker is not considered to be a blocker. Therefore, that contact counts as the first of the team's three hits.

26.6 ATTACK HIT DEFINED

If a player contacts the ball completely above the height of the net, and the player's foot is touching or has last touched the ground on or in front of the attack line, the attack-hit must have an upward trajectory.

THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!