

USA Volleyball Beach Coaching Accreditation Program
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Basic Beach Rules by Keith Murless

Match Format: Match play = Two out of three sets to 21. Third game to 15. Rally scoring. No cap. Win by two. *Teams switch sides every 7 points, every 5 in 3rd game.)* Warm-ups total 10 min: 4 min informally, then coin toss, then 5 min formal shared. *In warm ups, players may hit or serve from any direction, from either side or end of the net. Share nicely!* At coin toss the captains choose serve/side/receive and declare their teams' player serving order.

During the Set: The team that wins the coin toss chooses serve/side/receive for set 1. The other team makes the remaining choice, and both teams declare their service order. Serving team must comply with requests for blocker to move. There is a "Technical Timeout" after the 21st point of sets 1 and 2. There is no TTO in the event of a 3rd set. Each team may also call one timeout per set. *All timeouts are 30 seconds, but give the teams 15 seconds to reach the player box, and to return: 60 sec total.* At the end of each set, the teams return to their player boxes for a 1 minute break. The referee allows the team that lost the first coin toss to choose serve/side/receive for set 2. After this selection, the other team makes the remaining choice, and both teams declare their player service order. If there is a deciding 3rd set, the Referee will conduct a second coin toss. Remember that teams switch after every 5 points in the 3rd set. Play to 15, win by two. At the end of the match, both refs and all players shake hands at the ref stand.

Playing Actions and Faults: *These are similar to indoor volleyball, but with several important differences:* Position Faults: There is no positional requirement other than both players must be on their court at the moment the serve is contacted.

Service Order: Players must alternate service. At the coin toss each captain indicates who will serve first for her team.

Screening: Serving team may not impede the receiving teams' view of the server and the ball. The receiving team typically raises a hand to request that the opponent move.

Delay: The maximum time between rallies should be 12 seconds. Extra time allowed after big rallies. Teams who fail to prepare for timely service are sanctioned with a (yellow) warning. Subsequent delays are (red) points.

Blocks: The block contact counts as your first team contact. This often leads to "four hits" calls against the blockers' team. Note that the blocker, following her block, MAY make the second team contact..

Tips: "Open hand" tipping is illegal. (signal "illegal attack") To dink legally, the fingers must be "rigid and together" or knuckles used.

Hand setting: Setting is judged very strictly. *Think “old school” indoor volleyball.* The hands must act together smoothly, or a “double-hit” should be called. *Spin is not a fault... but spin is very often an indication that a fault has occurred.* Sets that visibly pause, or in which the ball is re-directed (perhaps by a swinging body position) are “held ball” faults. *Beach setters face their targets squarely and handle the ball cleanly.*

First ball: If a player DELIBERATELY uses open-hand action to contact ANY ball, that contact must be judged as a set. *There is no special rule for first team contact: ALL contacts using setting action should be judged strictly.* EXCEPTION: Open hands may be employed *and double contact allowed* in the act of “hard hit ball defense.” In defensive play, the referee must judge whether an open hand defensive contact was *reactive* defense. This is a legal play, OR did the defender have time/distance to *choose* to defend in an open-hand manner?

A “double hit” might be called “Setting over”: The net is legal only if the setter is clearly facing directly toward, or back-setting squarely toward, her target. A setter who sets over the net while off-angle or while her body is pivoting should be called for an “illegal attack”

Plane of Net: You may only contact the ball within your own “air-space.” (as in international indoor volleyball). Setters may not “gather” a ball back to their side over the net by reaching beyond the vertical plane. Attackers must only touch that part of the ball on their side of the net. (follow through after contact is legal). Blockers may penetrate the plane over the net and block only after an attack hit. (like indoors) UNDER the net: You may play any part of the ball, until it has passed completely through the plane. Encroachment: is legal in beach volleyball. *There is no centerline.* Pursuit: is legal. Pursuit works just like indoors... *You may pursue under the net... even through your opponents’ court!*

Interference: Is the most difficult call that the second referee must consider. *Interference is a fault that results in a point, not a replay.* If a player interferes with her opponents’ play, she must be called for the fault. Note that contact between opponents does not always constitute interference, (bump knees, step briefly on toes etc) and that interference can occur without physical contact. (example: fallen player under net prevents defender covering short.)

Simultaneous Contact: If teammates touch the ball simultaneously this counts as TWO team contacts. Either player may make the 3rd contact.

Net: contact with the net *while playing the ball* is a fault. Small contacts away from the play may be overlooked.

Ball Marks: The ball is “in” if it *physically touches the line*. Line movement can be confusing, but contact of ball-to-line is the rule. Players may occasionally request that a lines-call be reviewed and judged, using the “ball-mark” left in the sand. Be aware that “splash” of soft sand, or bumps and hanging lines can all confuse the judgment. The referee has the final say. *Smooth sand and well-tended lines are critical*. The referee(s) must offer an explanation.

Quick Tips for Player Refs

At the simple level, the losing team refs the next match with one player being the only referee, while the players are to keep the score, calling it out with each service. At the highest level there is a first referee (overall in charge), second referee (assisting), scorer, lines persons (4), ball retrievers, and sand levelers.

Referees must ref! Work teams are assigned to a court for a reason—to provide non-biased officiating for the two teams playing. Although most players will claim always to call their own violations, this is rarely the case. In many cases, players will make a violation and not know it, as well. It is for these reasons that a neutral party must referee a match.

Let the players play. Although you are the referee, your job in a tournament is a small one. Unlike indoor volleyball, the official plays a smaller role in the process of the game. Some tournaments require the referee to keep score, others do not. In a clean match, you may not even be needed. Call only what you see and let the players decide the outcome of a match. Calling a match too tightly on both sides will only defeat your purpose as an official and take control out of the players’ hands.

Making calls. If you see someone net or throw a ball, call it quickly and with confidence. Volleyball players have easily bruised egos and are quick to argue a quiet or hesitant call. Even referees make mistakes, but if you make one, make it with confidence so you are not questioned. Most players do not like replays, but if you are in doubt on a play, explain what you saw and tell the players to play it over again.

What does a Beach Coach do & How do They Do It?

Role: Competition - breaking away from the indoor model. During competition, the coach must participate solely as an advisor, not a participant. Do not over coach! On the AVP Tour the coach is permitted on court in a "box." The coach can only talk during timeouts and between sets. The coach cannot call timeouts or address the official. This is the system that is used by several regions in their youth program, most notably, the Florida Region. On the FIVB Tour, the coach is not allowed in the box during competition, cannot communicate with his team during competition, and can only be on the court leading up to the 20 minutes prior to the match. During the match there is no communication between the coach and his team. This is the system currently in place on the USA Junior Beach Tour.

Key importance, know the etiquette:

- Do not address officials
- Do not call timeouts
- Do not cheer or instruct during play