

# The Open Net League – Official Volleyball Rules

The Open Net League follows standard USA Volleyball (USAV) indoor volleyball rules unless otherwise modified by the league rules below. Open Net League rules regarding scoring, match length, coed requirements, rotation, officiating, and other league-specific procedures take precedence.

## Team Requirements

- Coed teams must have at least one male and one female player on the court for a match to be considered official.
- Teams must have a minimum of four players present to play an official match.
- Teams may play with four, five, or six players when necessary.
- All players must follow the established serving and rotation order.

## Match Play

- All matches use rally scoring.
- Sets are played to 25 points with a cap of 27.
- Each match is scheduled within a one-hour time block and must be completed within that time.
- If 10 minutes or less remain when the final scheduled set begins, that set will be played to 15 points with a cap of 17.
- League-specific scoring and time limits supersede standard USAV set and match formats.

## Ball Contacts

- A team is permitted a maximum of three contacts to return the ball over the net.
- A block contact does not count as one of the team's three contacts.
- A player may not contact the ball twice consecutively, except when permitted following a block or when multiple contacts occur during a single legal attempt to play the ball.
- The ball may contact any part of the body.
- The ball may not be caught, lifted, carried, or thrown.
- Simultaneous contact by two teammates counts as two team contacts, except during a block.

## Serving

- Both overhand and underhand serves are permitted.
- The server must contact the ball from behind the end line.
- The server may not step on or over the end line before contacting the ball.
- After contacting the serve, the player may step or land inside the court.
- If a player tosses or releases the ball and decides not to serve it, the ball must be allowed to fall without being contacted before another service attempt is made.
- A served ball that touches the net and continues legally into the opponent's court remains in play.
- Players must maintain the established serving order throughout the set.
- Players may not intentionally screen the receiving team from seeing the server or the flight of the serve.

## Rotation & Positioning

- Players rotate clockwise when their team wins the right to serve after the opposing team has served.
- Players must remain in the correct serving order.
- Once the ball has been legally served, players may move into their normal offensive or defensive positions.
- Every player is expected to participate in the rotation unless unable to play because of injury or unless being legally replaced by the team's designated libero.
- Serving or rotating out of order is a rotation fault and results in a point and service for the opposing team.

## Net & Center-Line Rules

- Contact with the net between the antennas during the action of playing the ball is a fault.
- Players may not use the net for support.
- Incidental contact outside the antennas that does not interfere with play may be permitted.
- Players may cross under the net provided they do not interfere with an opponent and do not illegally penetrate the opponent's court.
- Any contact or movement underneath the net that interferes with an opponent's ability to play the ball is a fault.
- Player safety takes priority. Dangerous or reckless movement underneath the net may be called as a fault even when contact is minimal.

## Ball at the Net

- A ball may touch the net while crossing.
- A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the team's three contacts.
- A ball crossing completely outside an antenna is out.
- A ball touching an antenna is out.
- Players may not reach over the net to interfere with an opponent before the opponent has completed an attack or otherwise had an opportunity to play the ball.
- After legally attacking the ball, a player's hand may follow through across the plane of the net as long as the initial contact was legal.

## Blocking

- Only front-row players may complete a block.
- Blocking a serve is not permitted.
- A player may reach beyond the net while blocking provided they do not interfere with the opponent's play before the opponent has completed their attack.
- A block does not count as one of the team's three contacts.
- After a block, any player—including the player who touched the block—may make the team's first contact.

## Back-Row Players

- Back-row players may not complete a block or participate in a completed block.
- A back-row player may not complete an attack on a ball entirely above the height of the net if the player takes off from on or in front of the attack line.
- A back-row player may legally attack a ball above the height of the net when taking off from behind the attack line.
- A back-row player may land in front of the attack line after legally taking off from behind it.

## Libero

Teams may use a libero under the following Open Net League rules:

- The libero is a defensive back-row player.
- The libero may replace only the designated player identified by the team, typically a middle blocker.
- The libero and the player being replaced must exchange positions with each other. The replaced player does not rotate into another position instead of the libero.

- Libero replacements do not count as regular rotation.
- The libero may only play in a back-row position.
- The libero may not complete a block or attempt to block.
- The libero may not complete an attack hit if the ball is entirely above the height of the net at contact.
- The libero may serve in one designated rotational position.

PLEASE NOTE: Before each match, a team using a libero must notify both the opposing team captain and the league organizer and identify the player the libero will replace in the back row.

All other players must continue rotating in the team's established clockwise rotation and serving order.

## **Attacking the Serve**

Players may receive a serve using any legal contact.

However, a player may not complete an attack hit directly from an opponent's serve when the ball is entirely above the height of the net and the player is contacting the ball from the front zone.

Blocking an opponent's serve is also prohibited.

## **In/Out Calls**

- A ball touching any part of a boundary line is IN.
- A ball landing completely outside the boundary line is OUT.
- A ball contacting an antenna is OUT.
- A ball crossing the net completely outside the antennas is OUT.
- A ball contacting an overhead object or facility structure will be governed by the league's established facility ground rules.

## **Common Violations**

Common violations include:

- Four team contacts
- Double contacts
- Lifts, catches, or carries
- Net violations

- Center-line/interference violations
- Foot faults while serving
- Serving out of rotation
- Positional or rotation faults
- Illegal attacks on a served ball
- Illegal back-row attacks
- Illegal blocks
- Blocking a serve
- Libero violations
- Ball contacting an antenna or crossing outside the antennas

## Officiating Responsibilities

Open Net League matches are primarily self-officiated with assistance from assigned line judges.

- Each team will be assigned officiating responsibilities throughout the season.
- During an assigned match, two players from the scheduled team must serve as line judges.
- Line judges are responsible for in/out calls and may assist with touches and antenna/line violations when clearly observed.
- The teams playing the match are responsible for honestly calling faults, including net violations, lifts/carries, doubles, rotation faults, illegal attacks, and other infractions.
- Players should make calls honestly and consistently regardless of the score.
- If there is reasonable disagreement and players and line judges cannot determine the correct call, the rally will be replayed.
- League organizers have final authority regarding rule interpretations and disputes.

## Timeouts

- Each team is permitted one 60-second timeout per set.
- Timeouts should be taken between rallies.
- Because matches operate within a fixed one-hour time block, teams should be prepared to resume play immediately following a timeout.

## Late Policy

- Teams are allowed a 10-minute grace period after the scheduled match start time.
- Teams unable to field the required minimum of four players within the grace period may forfeit the match.
- Teams are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes before their scheduled match.

# Sportsmanship

The Open Net League is built on respect, competition, community, and fun.

Players are expected to:

- Treat opponents, teammates, line judges, league staff, and spectators with respect.
- Practice honest self-officiating.
- Make calls fairly regardless of the score.
- Avoid excessive arguing over judgment calls.
- Display good sportsmanship at all times.
- Accept league organizer decisions respectfully.
- Prioritize player safety.

Unsportsmanlike conduct, abusive or threatening language, intentional cheating, dangerous play, or repeated rule violations may result in a warning, point or match penalty, suspension, or removal from league play without refund.

## Rule Authority

The Open Net League uses the current USA Volleyball Indoor Rules as the foundation for gameplay.

When an Open Net League rule differs from standard USAV rules, the Open Net League rule takes precedence.

For situations not specifically addressed in these league rules, the current USA Volleyball Indoor Rules will be used as guidance. Final interpretations and decisions remain at the discretion of Open Net League organizers.