



**EXCEL**  
EXCELLENCE CENTER FOR ENHANCED LEARNING

***VOLLEYBALL  
LEAGUE  
RULEBOOK***

## **Mission:**

**The mission of Terrell ISD ExCEL is to enhance student development, promote staff wellbeing, and support its senior community by providing access to programs and resources that strengthen the mind, body, and character.**

## **League Goal & Values:**

The overall goal of every *ExCEL* Youth Sports League is to positively impact the lives of our student-athletes through physical, social, emotional, and educational growth opportunities that accompany participation in sports.

In order to accomplish this goal, it takes commitment, great effort, and “buy in” toward the following key values:

- **Players Have a Great Experience:**  
All of our student-athletes should get to play in a safe & positive environment
- **Adults Focus on Development:**  
Right now, getting better is way more important than getting trophies  
We should strive to recognize and foster the development of both hard and soft skills:
  - Sport-specific skills, character, problem solving, teamwork, leadership, communication, resilience, and work habits
- **Everyone Takes Responsibility:**  
We all contribute to the success of the league
  - Being Present, Prepared and On Time
  - Being Cooperative, Supportive, Knowledgeable, and Respectful
  - Being your Best

## **Final Note for Parents & Coaches:**

Always remember that our players are impacted by all we say and do; whether at practices, games, in the car, or at the dinner table.

So, before saying or acting upon what may be on our minds...

Let's ask: *Is what I'm about to say or do going to make my Player or Team better at this sport? Will it make them better as a person?*

If not, we should move on to more important things so we can make sure, to the best of our abilities, that these athletes are developing as players, and young men & women.

Together, through our combined efforts, we can maintain these values, accomplish our goal, and fulfill the mission.

Thank you for being part of the ExCEL, and thank you for the investments you have decided to make toward the success of our youth.

Respectfully,

A.J. Knight  
ExCEL Director

## League Rules

- **COURT PREPARATION**

- *COURT SIZE*

- Playing Area: 18m x 9m standard court size is used for all levels of play.

- *SERVING LINE*

- All players are encouraged to serve from standard service line (white line) but some are permitted to move closer if needed. Once players demonstrate successful serves from a specific distance, they are encouraged to move back to the next serving line and/or begin serving overhand, if not already doing so.
- Kindergarten - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Determined seasonally.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade - Minimum of 19ft. service distance (marked by grey line – free throw line of basketball court). Players should move back as soon as they are successful.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and Above – Standard serving line of 30ft. (marked by white line).

- *NET HEIGHT*

- Kinder - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade - Net height is 7'0 \*May include 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in Fall Season\*
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade and Above - Net height is 7'4-1/8

- *GAME BALL*

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade and Below -Tachikara VolleyLite or similar \*May include 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in Fall Season\*
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade and Above - Tachikara Official Size Ball or similar

- **PRE-MATCH PROCEDURES & GAME PROTOCOL**

- *PRE-MATCH CONFERENCE* – A conference will be conducted by the referee between a captain and/or coach from each team prior to each game. During the pre-match conference, referees can explain rules for which coaches need clarification.

- *OBSTRUCTIONS*

- A ball hitting the ceiling or overhead obstruction above a playable area shall remain in play provided the ball contacts the ceiling or obstruction on the same side of the net occupied by the team who last played the ball, and the ball is legally hit next by the same team.
- An obstruction, which is directly above the net line, will be considered a re-serve if a ball hits it or goes over it on the serve.
- A basketball goal in the down position & not over the court, will be considered out-of-bounds.
- A ball that touches any of the structures outside the court boundaries (net & lines) will be considered dead at the time of contact.

- *COACHES*

- **Must have a current, approved ExCEL / TISD background screening renewed annually (August 1st) based on ExCEL Policy. Upon clearance, Coaches must obtain an ExCEL Coaches Badge, that is to be worn for ALL Practices & Games.**
- **The Head Coach is responsible for the conduct of all persons connected with their team (Assistant Coach, players, scorekeepers, parents and fans)**
- **In the event that no coach is available, a parent may stand-in as Head Coach; the parent must be 21 or older and have a current, approved background screening with TISD.**

- *COACHES (continued)*
  - For League Play, a maximum of two (2) Coaches may be standing during play. Any other Coach(es) may instruct players while seated in the bench area.
  - When seated, Coaches should be in the seats nearest the scorekeeper.
  - Coaches should not address the referee during the game except to signal a time-out.
    - Only Head Coaches (or designee in case of Head Coach's absence) may request time-outs.
    - During the time-out, a coach may consult with the scorer's table or Official to request clarification of an issue. This conversation should not extend past the duration of the time-out (30 seconds). In most cases, the Official's determination is final and should be accepted respectfully. If the issue requires further assistance, the radio (walkie-talkie) at the scorer's table should be used to call a League Administrator to the court for a final determination. Prolonged conversations or a Coach's inability to accept the determination may be ruled a "delay of game" by the Official or the League Administrator.  
\*Delay of Game penalties are non-reversible and result in the loss of 1 point and the serve (if applicable).
- *COIN TOSS* – A pre-match coin toss will be conducted by the referee with a Captain from each team.  
**Visitor's Team Captain calls the toss.**  
The Winner of the coin toss is awarded with the option to select their team to have the first serve of sets 1 & 3 -OR- Select a preferred side of the court / net for the match.  
\*Teams remain on the same side of the court / net for every set (teams do not switch sides).  
\*\*The only exception is when an Official determines that one side of the court / net creates an unfair advantage and allows or instructs teams to switch sides.
- *LINE JUDGES* – (Required 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and above / Optional 6<sup>th</sup> Grade and down)  
Each team will provide a linesperson fourteen (14) years or older.  
The line judge will be positioned at the **back corner** on the **left-hand side of the player serving**.
  - First line judge: Stands to the right of the referee on the same side of the court
  - Second line judge: Stands catty-corner to the first line judgeThe line judge does not change sides during match play. The line judge is not allowed to have any distractions such as a cell phone, children, etc. The line judge is discouraged from sitting down, cheering, or coaching during a game. The referee has the right to overrule a line judge at any time. The referee also has the right to remove a line judge at any time without explanation. A line judge should only address the referee during a dead ball and only to signal their call.
  - A ball will be considered out-of-bounds if the ball:
    - Touches the wall, objects mounted on the wall or objects on the floor outside the court.
    - Touches the floor outside of the court's boundary lines regardless of overhanging objects.
    - Touches the net antennas or does not cross the net within the antennas.
    - Breaks the plane of an adjacent court, goes over or touches the bleachers, benches, official's table, etc.
  - The ball is considered in bounds if it touches the line.
  - A foot fault occurs when a server's foot TOUCHES or CROSSES the serving line prior to or during the serve.

- *TIMEKEEPER AND SCOREKEEPER*
  - The Home Team will provide an official scorekeeper, fourteen (14) years or older, for each match. The official scorekeeper will be responsible for keeping the score, substitutions, and time-outs of each team on the official score-sheet provided by ExCEL. The score kept by this person will be considered “the official” scorebook.
  - The Visiting Team will provide an official timekeeper who will be responsible for the official game time and unofficial score by operating the electronic scoreboard and/or table-top scoreboard (scoring flip-chart).
  - If a team is unable to provide their required official, the opposing team may provide both officials.
  - No other person and/or children should be at the scorer’s table except for the official scorekeeper and timekeeper.
- *LINE-UP*
  - The line-up of players in serving order will be given to the official scorekeeper after the coin toss and prior to the start of the match. This is the responsibility of the head coach of each team.
  - Player Identification - Each player should have a different jersey number that will serve as their identifier. Each player’s name and jersey number are to be listed on the lineup and scoresheet.
- *PLAYER UNIFORM*
  - Uniforms are the responsibility of the team. Players should have uniform tops with same or similar color to the rest of the team. Each player must have a unique number to identify them. Teams are encouraged to keep the cost of uniforms below \$30 per player. ExCEL also recommends the uniform bottoms of the players are consistent and matching in color.
  - Proper court shoes are required to be worn by all players (non-marking, closed toe, traditional tennis shoe style)
  - Hard or unyielding guards, casts or braces are not permitted. Braces or supports are permitted (limiting an allowed brace to extend no further than halfway down the forearm) only if the referee judges them not to be dangerous. The referee may require that the player cover the appliance. This does not include material wristbands.
  - No hard plastic or metal jewelry may be worn during games. No hard hair accessories will be permitted. Band-Aids or tape will be allowed to be worn over earrings.
  - Knee pads are recommended and should be worn by all players.
- *WARM-UP*
  - Ten (10) minutes may be allowed for warm-up prior to the scheduled start time of the game. This time can be used as follows:
    - 2 Minutes of Shared Court Time for Ball Handling / Passing (balls may not cross the net)
    - 4 Minutes of Hitting for Visiting Team (last minute used for serving)
    - 4 Minutes of Hitting for Home Team (last minute used for serving)
    - \*The team that is NOT hitting / serving is to stand behind their side’s service line and shag the balls (roll them back to the other side)

- **MATCH PLAY**

- *NORMAL MATCH PLAY*

- A match will consist of three (3) sets.
- Sets will be played to twenty-five (25) points (rally scoring), OR fifteen (15) minutes, running clock, whichever comes first. \*Win by two (2)\*
- **All three (3) sets will be played** and count in the standings.

- *OVERTIME SITUATIONS*

- If a tie exists or a two (2) point margin is not present at the end of fifteen (15) minutes, the clock will be reset for an additional three (3) minutes of “sudden death” overtime.
- If, at the end of the regulation set, the server has not completed her maximum number of serves, she may continue to serve until a side-out occurs, a two (2) point margin occurs for either team, or she reaches her maximum number of serves.
- The winner will be declared as follows:
- The first team to gain a two (2) point advantage at any time during the three (3) minute overtime will be declared the winner.
  - If at the end of the three (3) minute overtime period, one team has a one (1) point advantage, that team will be declared the winner.
  - Should a tie exist at the end of the three (3) minutes, the set will be declared a tie. There will be only one (1) “sudden death” time period allowed during regular season games.  
**This rule may be amended for tournament play.**

- *CLOCK STOPPAGE* – The game clock will only be stopped if there is a time-out granted or if there is an injured player. The referee will signal the scorekeeper to stop the clock in these instances. Coaches and parents should not address the scorekeeper to “stop the clock” when they feel the situation warrants it. The scorekeepers are to only stop the clock on a signal from the referee. By addressing the scorekeeper, coaches and parents distract the scorekeeper from watching for the referee’s signal. This could result in a penalty to the offending team.

- *TIME-OUTS*

- One (1) thirty (30) second time-out is allowed per game (set). The clock will be re-started upon signal of the serve (whistle) by the referee.
  - \*Unused Time-outs do NOT carry over to the next set
- If a player is bleeding or injured, an official’s time-out is taken. The wound must be covered for a player to return to the court; and if blood is present on anything worn by the player, it must be removed or replaced before the player can return to the court. If needed, any t-shirt can be substituted.
- Any player taken out of a set for an injury will not be allowed to return to that set. The player should be noted as “injured” on the scoresheet for that set. Should the player return to the next set, she will be inserted into the lineup and placed onto the court as if she never left.

- **MATCH PLAY (continued)**

- *OTHER TIMING POLICIES*

- Time is allowed for a brief team “huddle” between sets (2 minutes or less).
- Time allowed between matches will be at least five (5) minutes from the end of the last game of previous match or scheduled time whichever is longer.
- *PACE* – During the final minute of a game, the intent is for play to remain at the same pace as regular play. If play is being deliberately delayed in a close game, the referee may elect to stop the clock until the whistle is blown for the serve. The decision to stop the clock is made by the referee and cannot be challenged. The clock is not to be stopped for normal speed ball handling during the last minutes. The spirit of this rule is to prohibit any coach, player, or team from intentionally slowing the game down as to assure a win. Any blatant violation of this rule will be reported to the League Director.

- *FORFEIT POLICY*

- A game shall be considered a forfeit if a team has less than five (5) legal players present on the court at game time. This policy shall be in force for all regular season and tournament games.
- Forfeit score is 15-0 for each game forfeited.
- Forfeit time of the first game is game time. Forfeit time for the second game is ten (10) minutes after the start of game 1. Forfeit time for the third game is fifteen (15) minutes after the start time of game 1.
- Other Instances – See Addenda

- *PLAYER PARTICIPATION*

- Equitable playing time is required for all players.
  - Coaches may enforce their own playing rules based on participation at practice and for other disciplinary reasons. Team rules (if applicable) are to be submitted to the league for approval and distributed to each member of the team and enforced equally.
  - Chronic lateness or absenteeism of a player at games or practices may result in loss of playing time.
- A player arriving late for any game may not play if she is not present at the start of that game. She is eligible to play in the next game if she arrives late for the first and second games. The late arriving player will be entered onto the score sheet at the bottom of the rotation. Any player arriving late for game three will not be allowed to play.

- *SUBSTITUTIONS*

- **Option 1 – Automatic Rotation & Substitutions (Recommended for new or younger teams)**
  - Each team will start the game with six (6) players on the court. The remaining players will automatically rotate into play as “side-out” is called. The previous server leaves the court and the next player listed on the roster rotates onto the court into the back-center position. A minimum of five (5) players are required for the game to be considered official.
- **Option 2 – Player / Position Based Substitutions (Traditional USAV Indoor, NFHS, & NCAA Volleyball Rules)**

- **THE PLAYING RULES**

- *THE SERVE*

- The player in the back-right position shall hit the ball with one hand, fist or arm, either held or after release, from behind their serving line.
- The server must wait for the whistle and referee's signal before serving the ball and the ball shall be contacted within eight (8) seconds after the referee's signal to serve.
- Failure to do so will result in a maximum of one (1) warning and any subsequent infractions will result in a side-out (No points awarded).
- The ball must be sharply hit with one hand and must cross above the net within the net antennas.
- All players except the server must be inside the court at serve.
- Teams do not rotate before their first serve.
- **Re-Serves: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade & Below Only** – At the beginning of each player's **term of service** they will be allowed two (2) attempts (only if needed) for a successful serve. Should the ball be struck and fail to cross the net in-bounds, the referee will call a re-serve; and the player will be allowed to attempt their serve a second time. This only applies to each player's **first service attempt during each term of service**. \*Term of service is also known as a rotation.
- **Service Tossing Errors: All Levels**
  - Once the serving action is initiated, including an underhand serve, if the server tosses the ball and then catches it or allows it to fall to the floor, this is considered a service tossing error, including a ball that touches the server as it falls. After a service tossing error, the referee must authorize the service again (re-serve) and the server must execute it within the next 8 seconds. One (1) service tossing error is permitted for each service attempt.
- **Maximum Consecutive Points from Service:** (Rec divisions only)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade & Below: A player is allowed to serve and make only three (3) consecutive points. After that, the referee will signal a side-out (No Points Awarded for this side-out)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade & Above: A player is allowed to serve and make only five (5) consecutive points. After that, the referee will signal a side-out (No Points Awarded for this side-out)
- No player is permitted to complete an attack hit on the opponent's service.  
(A serve may not be spiked or blocked by the receiving team above the net in the front zone)

- *OUT OF ROTATION*

- Teams found to be out of rotation order will receive a warning on the first violation. Players will be placed in the correct order and play will resume. (Any points scored by an incorrect server will be taken off the score.) A second violation will result in a yellow card being given, loss of the ball by the offending team or the award of a point to the non-offending team.

○ *HITTING THE BALL DURING PLAY*

- After the initial return of the serve, the ball may be played with an overhand or underhand pass, one-hand dig, a block, and a spike or with any part of the body above the waist.
- Only a short contact with the ball is allowed. A catch or throw is not permitted.
- After receipt and 1<sup>st</sup> contact of the serve, a front row player has no restrictions as to legal contact of the ball. A back-row player may complete an attack (spike) hit from behind the ten (10) foot line provided their foot or feet does not touch or cross the line. After the hit, the player may land between the 10-foot line and the net, known as the front zone. A back-row player may not block the ball when they are in the front zone.
- Playing the ball back to the opponent on the first touch is permitted as long as it is NOT an “Attack Hit” (as previously discussed). It is suggested however, that players be encouraged to learn how to return the ball with more than one touch.
- A maximum of three (3) touches are permitted, with the exception of the touch on the block, which then permits four (4) touches; the ball must be played over the net on or before the last permitted touch.
- The ball may not be contacted by the same player twice consecutively with the exception of a block.
- A ball may not be caught, pushed, carried, lifted, or held.
- If players touch the ball simultaneously at any time, it will be considered one touch, and any player may touch the ball on the next touch provided there is another touch allowable. This is inclusive only to the two players that touched the ball simultaneously.

○ *PLAY AT THE NET*

- Players may touch the net provided it does not interfere with the play. It will be the referees’ judgment as to whether the action did or did not interfere with play.
- Players may step on or have a foot partially above the centerline. No other part of the body, i.e. hand, knee, elbows, etc., may touch or cross the centerline. If their foot or any part of their body completely clears the centerline and goes into the opposing court, a violation has occurred.

○ *CONDUCT OF THE MATCH*

- The referee will conduct the match. Any calls made by the referee should not be questioned during the play of a game. A Coach or Team Captain may ask a referee to repeat the call but may not ask for justification. If clarification is sought in order to genuinely understand the rule it must be discussed during a time-out (reference page 3 “Coaches” section). A Coach or Team Captain may also request from the referee a lineup check during a game. During the games of a match, the decisions of the referee are final.
  - Non-Adherence - A first violation will receive a warning; a second violation will receive a yellow card loss of the ball by the offending team or award of a point to the non-offending team; a third violation will receive a red card which will result in removal of the offending person and/or team from the gym.
- Players, Coaches, and Spectators exhibiting an un-sportsmanlike behavior during a match may cause a penalty to be assessed on the offending team. The range of penalty assessed could be a verbal warning up to removal from the league.
  - Examples of un-sportsmanlike behavior include: heckling, chanting, or calling out during the service attempt of an opposing player; negatively engaging with any players, coaches, or officials during the game including line judges and scorekeepers; any demonstrations of disrespect or mal-intent.

- **ADDENDA**

- *PROTESTS*

- There are two instances where a protest can be made.
  - A team plays an unregistered or ineligible player.
  - There has been an obvious error made in the application of the rules that directly affects the outcome of the match and the referee admits it.
    - \*A team may not protest based on judgement calls made by the referee.
- Protests can only be made after the contest has been played.
- In order to protest, the Coach should first note the objection on the score sheet and get the referee to sign it. The Coach must then formally submit the protest in writing to the ExCEL, in person or via email within 48 hours of the match (even if the team won the match). No objection/protest shall be withdrawn because the protestor won the match.
- The ExCEL will consider the protest and render final determination regarding the outcome of the contest.

- *ADDING PLAYERS*

- Players may not be added to a roster after the fourth league match has begun. Coaches may petition the ExCEL for additional players if their roster drops below seven (7) players due to season-ending injury or players dropping out.

- *SCHEDULING / RESCHEDULING REQUESTS*

- Each Coach can make scheduling requests at the time of registration and/or preseason coaches meeting. ExCEL will attempt to honor but not guarantee these requests.
- After the league starts, coaches must coordinate rescheduling requests with the opposing Coach and the ExCEL. The opposing Coach has a right to refuse the rescheduling request.
- Rescheduled games may be set during the requesting team's practice time that week or the next.

- *PLAYOFFS \*If Scheduled*

- Any rostered player who plays one (1) or more regular season games is eligible for the playoffs
- All games in the playoffs will follow the same rules and regulations as in the regular season with the exception that games cannot end in a tie
- All teams will be seeded according to their regular season standings in Team Sideline:
  - First Place Team = #1 Seed, Second Place Team = #2 Seed etc.

- *TIE BREAKERS*

- Determined in the following order:
  - Winning Percentage
  - Head to Head Results
  - Head to Head Differential
  - Common Opponents Results
  - Total Points Differential
  - Lowest Number of Forfeits
  - Coin Toss

**THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE *ExCEL* VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE!**