



EXCEL
EXCELLENCE CENTER FOR ENHANCED LEARNING

**VOLLEYBALL
LEAGUE
OFFICIAL RULEBOOK**

ExCEL Mission

The mission of *ExCEL* is to champion the development of students and benefit the lives of community members by facilitating access to programs and resources that provide opportunities to enhance learning, acquire and refine skills, improve health, build character, and practice fellowship.

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 league’s success
 - Being Present, Prepared and On Time
 - Being Cooperative, Supportive, Knowledgeable, and Respectful
 - Being your Best

Final Note to 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

VOLLEYBALL 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.
- 9-U & Below – Players may serve from a Minimum of 10ft. from net (marked by white line).
- 10-U to 12-U - 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.
- 13-U and above – Minimum of 24ft. service distance (marked by red paint of basketball court perimeter). Players should move back to standard serving line of 30ft. as soon as they are successful from 24ft.

- *NET HEIGHT*

- 10U & Below - Net height is 6'6
- 11-12U - Net height is 7'0
- 13-U and Above - Net height is 7'4-1/8

- *GAME BALL*

- 7 to12-U- Tachikara VolleyLite or similar
- 13-U and Above - Tachikara Leather Ball SV5W Gold 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 an overhead obstruction above a playable area shall remain in play provided the ball contacts the ceiling or obstruction on the side of the net extended that is occupied by the team that 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 not over the court, which is in the down position, will be considered out-of-bounds.
- A ball that touches any of the drop-down curtains will be considered dead at the time of contact.

- *COACHES*

- **Only Coaches and Assistant Coaches who have a current TISD cleared background check (updated on or after January 1st each year) and who have registered with the ExCEL and are wearing their Coach's Badge are allowed on the bench with players.** No parents, children, or players from other teams are allowed to sit with the team.

- *COACHES (continued)*
 - For 9-U and above, only one (1) Coach may be standing during play. Any other Coach(es) may instruct players while seated on the bench. Coaches may stand to signal referee for a time out.
 - When seated, Coaches should be in the seats nearest the scorekeeper.
 - Coaches will not address the referee during the game except to signal a time out.
 - During the timeout, a coach may consult with the scorer's table or Official to ask for clarification if needed. This conversation shall not extend past the duration of the timeout. A prolonged conversation lasting longer than the timeout may be ruled a "delay of game" 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. **Visitors call the toss.** The team who wins the coin toss will gain first serve of the match. For the second game, teams change to the opposite court; and the serve changes hands from the team that served first. For the third game, the teams change courts again, and the team that served first in game 1 also serves first in game 3.
- *LINESPERSON* – (Required 11-U and above / Optional 10-U and down)

Each team will provide a linesperson fourteen (14) years or older. The linesperson will be positioned at the **back corner** on the **left-hand side of the server that is across the net**. The linesperson does not change sides during match play. The linesperson is not allowed to have any distractions such as a cell phone, children, etc. The linesperson is discouraged from sitting down, cheering, or coaching during a game. The referee has the right to overrule a linesperson at any time. The referee also has the right to remove a linesperson at any time without explanation. A linesperson should only address the referee during a dead ball and only to signal out- of-bounds, tipped ball, or a foot fault.

 - 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 of each team while also running the electronic scoreboard.
 - The score kept by this official will be considered "the official" scorebook.
 - A coach may request a time out from the referee. The time out does not begin until the referee blows their whistle and signals for the time out.
 - It is recommended each team have an assistant coach or parent to keep their team's score. The team's scorekeeper will be responsible for contacting the official scorekeeper in case of any late arriving players. Each team's scorekeeper may sit at the scorer's table but will not be allowed to influence or distract the official scorekeeper in anyway. No other person and/or children should be at the scorer's table except for the official scorekeeper and one volunteer scorekeeper from each team.

- *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 \$15 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.

- *OVERTIME SITUATIONS (continued)*
 - 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 coach’s team.
- *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 Addendums
- *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*
 - **Divisions 10-U & Below - Automatic Rotation & Substitution**
 - 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.

○ *SUBSTITUTIONS (continued)*

▪ **Divisions 11-U & Above – USA Volleyball Indoor Rules –**

15.5 SUBSTITUTION

15.5.1 A substitution is the act by which a player, other than the Libero or his/her replacement player, after being recorded by the scorer, enters the game to occupy the position of another player, who must leave the court at that moment.

15.5.2 When the substitution is enforced through injury to a player in play this may be accompanied by the coach (or game captain) showing the corresponding hand signal.

15.6 LIMITATION OF SUBSTITUTIONS

USAV 15.6:

a. Twelve substitutions are the maximum permitted per team per set. Substitution of one or more players is permitted at the same time.

b. A player in the starting line-up may leave the set and re-enter, but only in his/her previous position in the line-up (Exception 15.7).

c. A substitute may enter a set in the position of a teammate in the starting line-up.

d. Unlimited individual entries by a substitute within the team's allowable 12 substitutions are permitted. Each entry must be in the same position in the line-up.

e. More than one substitute may enter the set in each position.

15.7 EXCEPTIONAL SUBSTITUTION

A player (except the Libero) who cannot continue playing due to injury or illness, should be substituted legally. If this is not possible, the team is entitled to make an EXCEPTIONAL substitution, beyond the limits of Rule 15.6.

An exceptional substitution means that any player who is not on the court at the time of the injury/illness, except the Libero, second Libero or their regular replacement player, may be substituted into the game for the injured/ill player. The substituted injured/ill player is not allowed to re-enter the match.

An exceptional substitution cannot be counted in any case as a regular substitution but should be recorded on the score sheet as part of the total substitutions in the set and the match.

USAV 15.7:

a. An exceptional substitution is not counted as an individual entry or as part of the total team substitutions.

b. Priority for exceptional substitution:

i. by the starter or a substitute who has played in the position of the injured player, or by any substitute who has not already participated in the set;

ii. by any substitute on the bench, regardless of position previously played;

iii. by the Libero.

15.8 SUBSTITUTION FOR EXPULSION OR DISQUALIFICATION

An EXPELLED or DISQUALIFIED player must be substituted immediately through a legal substitution. If this is not possible, the team is declared INCOMPLETE.

15.9 ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION

15.9.1 A substitution is illegal, if it exceeds the limitations indicated in Rule 15.6 (except the case of Rule 15.7), or an unregistered player is involved.

USAV 15.9.1: The following substitutes are illegal:

- a. player not on the roster;
- b. player with illegal number or uniform;
- c. exceeds the number of total team substitutions;
- d. player expelled or disqualified;
- e. player replaced by exceptional substitution.

15.9.2 When a team has made an illegal substitution and the play has been resumed the following procedure shall apply, in sequence:

15.9.2.1 the team is penalized with a point and service to the opponent;

15.9.2.2 the substitution must be rectified;

15.9.2.3 the points scored by the team at fault since the fault was committed are cancelled; the opponent's points remain valid.

USAV 15.9.2.3:

- a. If the team at fault is receiving and discovery is after the opponents have served, all points previously scored by the offending team shall be retained. The serving team will be awarded a point unless the error is discovered after the serving team has scored a point. In this case, no additional point will be awarded.
- b. If it is not possible to determine when the error first occurred and the offending team is serving, only the last point in that term of service will be removed.

USAV 15.9.2.4: No substitution will be charged to the team or player(s), even if required to correct the wrong entry. In addition, any player or team substitutions charged at the time of the wrong entry shall be removed from the score sheet as though they had never occurred.

15.10 SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE

15.10.1 Substitution must be carried out within the substitution zone.

15.10.2 A substitution shall only last the time needed for recording the substitution on the score sheet and allowing entry and exit of the players.

15.10.3a The actual request for substitution starts at the moment of the entrance of the substitute player(s) into the substitution zone, ready to play, during an interruption. The coach does not need to make a substitution hand signal except if the substitution is for injury or before the start of the set.

USAV 15.10.3a: A verbal request for substitution is not acknowledged by the referees. The substitute must enter the substitution zone for the request to be acknowledged, except for a substitution related to an injury.

15.10.3b If the player is not ready, the substitution is not granted and the team is sanctioned for a delay.

15.10.3c The request for substitution is acknowledged and announced by the scorer or 2nd referee, by use of the buzzer or whistle respectively. The 2nd referee authorizes the substitution.

15.10.4 If a team intends to make simultaneously more than one substitution, all substitute players must enter the substitution zone at the same time to be considered in the same request. In this case, substitutions must be made in succession, one pair of players after another. If one is illegal, the legal one(s) is/are granted and the illegal is rejected and subject to a delay sanction.

USAV 15.10.4: Any significant delay between substitutes entering the substitution zone shall result in the team being limited to one substitute.

○ *TIME OUTS*

- One (1) thirty (30) second time out is allowed per game. The clock will be re-started upon signal of the serve (whistle) by the referee.
- 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 either 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 game for an injury will not be allowed to return to that game. The player should be noted as "injured" on the scoresheet for that game. Should the player return to the next game, she will be inserted into the lineup and placed onto the court as if she never left.
- Time is allowed between games for switching sides and player placement only. A team "huddle" is to be kept as brief as possible (under 2 minutes).
- 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.

● **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, behind and without feet coming into contact with the 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: 8-U & Below Only – At the beginning of each player's term of service they will be allowed two (2) attempts (if needed) for a successful serve. Should the ball fail to be a ball in play (ball goes into the net without crossing, ball goes out of bounds, etc) the referee will call a re-serve; and the player will be allowed to 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 Error (9-U & Above) – For Overhand Servers Only - If the ball, after having been tossed or released by the server, lands without touching the player, it is considered a service tossing error. After a service tossing error, the referee must authorize the serve again (re-serve) and the server must execute it within the next 8 seconds. One service tossing error is permitted for each service. *Note: Service Tossing Errors are considered separately from the qualifying factors permitting Re-Serves.
- Maximum Consecutive Points from Service (Rec divisions only)
 - U-10 & Below: A player is allowed to serve and make only three (3) consecutive points. After that the referee will signal a side-out.
 - U-11 & Above: A player is allowed to serve and make only five (5) consecutive points. After that the referee will signal a side-out.
- No player is permitted to complete an attack hit on the opponent's service. (aka: A serve may not be spiked or blocked in the front zone by the receiving 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.

- *HITTING THE BALL DURING PLAY (continued)*
 - After receipt and 1st 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 standing in front of the ten (10) foot line.
 - 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.
- *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.
- *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 timeout (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.

- **ADDENDUMS**

- *PROTESTS*

- There are two instances where a protest of a set can be made. Protests can only be made after the set has been played.
 - A team plays an unregistered or ineligible player.
 - There has been an obvious error made in the application of the rules of the set that directly affects the outcome of the match and the referee admits it.
 - *A team may not protest a set based on judgement calls made by the referee.
- In order to protest, the Coach must 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 24 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 if upheld, a decision will be made whether the set should be replayed based on the result of the error on the outcome of the set.

- *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 record:
 - First Place Team = #1 Seed, Second Place Team = #2 Seed etc.

- *TIE BREAKERS*

- Determined in the following order:
 - Head to Head Result – Winner will get better seed
 - Set Differential (total sets won vs. total sets lost) in Head to Head Games – Greater margin won will get better seed
 - Overall Season Set Differential - Greater margin won will get better seed
 - Coin Flip

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE ExCEL VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE.