



VOLLEYBALL

RULES REFERENCE

HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALS QUICK GUIDE

2026-27 NFHS

CODE & GENDER APPLICATION

The core NFHS rules apply to boys and girls; state-authorized equipment may differ.

Study aid only. Always use the current official rulebook, interpretations, mechanics manual, state or conference adoptions, bulletins and assignment instructions.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS

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UNDER THE STRIPES NETWORK | VERIFIED JULY 23, 2026

Core Contest Framework

Start here before moving into situation-specific study.

Topic	Quick reference
Players / match	Six players on court. Best three of five sets is common; sets 1-4 to 25, deciding set to 15, win by two.
Court / net	Court is 18 x 9 meters. Net height: boys 7 ft 11 5/8 in; girls 7 ft 4 1/8 in, subject to age/level modifications.
Rally scoring	A point is awarded on every rally. Serve alternates after a loss of rally.
Contacts	Maximum three team hits before return, excluding a legal block contact.
Rotation	Players must be in legal serving order and correct relative positions at the moment of serve.
Timeouts / substitutions	Two timeouts per set; 18 substitutions per set under the standard NFHS rule.

Pregame Crew Checklist

- Confirm jurisdiction, start time, contest level, crew assignments and state/local modifications.
- Inspect playing area, equipment, clocks, team/bench areas and required game personnel.
- Conduct the required coaches/captains meeting; address sportsmanship and unusual ground/facility conditions.
- Review timing, substitution, timeout, penalty and end-of-period/inning procedures.
- Establish crew communication, primary coverage, rotations, help situations and emergency procedures.

Primary Coverage & Mechanics

Use the current NFHS officials manual and your state mechanics. Maintain a patient whistle/flag, officiate your primary, expand only when necessary, and communicate decisive information to the crew before enforcement.

High-Priority Rules

Area	What the official must know
Libero designation	A team may designate zero, one or two liberos for each set in 2026-27, but only one may be on court at a time.
Libero uniform	Libero top must clearly contrast; libero bottoms no longer must match team bottoms. Apply full uniform-number requirements.
Second contact	Do not call multiple contacts on a team's second hit when the ball is played to a teammate, unless there is prolonged contact.
Net / center line	Judge actual net contact and interference; allow legal penetration that does not interfere or create a safety concern.
Bench electronics	Electronic devices may be used as allowed, but not to communicate with players on the court during play.
Officials platform	Host must provide a safe, stable platform; correct hazards before the match.

Gender & Competition Differences

Area	Application
Net height	Boys: 7 ft 11 5/8 in. Girls: 7 ft 4 1/8 in.
Ball surface	A state association may authorize a textured/non-smooth ball for boys and/or girls beginning 2026-27.
All other core rules	Scoring, contacts, rotation, libero operation, substitutions and sanctions are otherwise the same.

Important

A boys/girls distinction is included only where an actual equipment, dimension, adoption or competition difference exists. The absence of a separate section means the same NFHS playing rule applies.

Situations to Review

Situation	Crew response / study point
Setter double-contacts second ball to teammate	Legal if it is not prolonged contact and the second hit is played to a teammate.
Two liberos listed	Legal in 2026-27; only one can be on court. Track exchanges and redesignation procedures.
Server contacts ball before authorization	Cancel the serve and apply the proper re-serve/penalty procedure based on the exact act.
Overlap at contact for serve	Fault if players are not in required relative positions at the instant the serve is contacted.

Postgame Self-Review

- Which ruling required the strongest rules knowledge?
- Did the crew communicate ball status, clock status, penalty/foul details and restart correctly?
- Was any call made outside a primary without clear necessity?
- What rule, case play or mechanic should be verified before the next assignment?
- What one crew adjustment would improve consistency?

Official References

NFHS Volleyball Rules

<https://nfhs.org/sports/volleyball/rules>

2026-27 Rules Changes

<https://nfhs.org/stories/libero-rules-adjusted-in-high-school-volleyball>

2026-27 Points of Emphasis

<https://nfhs.org/resources/sports/volleyball-points-of-emphasis-2026-27>

RULES DISCLAIMER

This educational quick reference is not an official rules book and does not reproduce the complete NFHS code. Rules, interpretations and state adoptions change. Before every season and assignment, consult the current NFHS rules book, case book, officials manual, your state high school association and the contest administrator.