

CHAPTER FOUR PLAYING ACTIONS

8. STATES OF PLAY

8.1 BALL IN PLAY

The ball is in play from the moment of the hit of the service authorized by the first referee.

8.2 BALL OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play at the moment of the fault which is whistled by one of the referees; in the absence of a fault, at the moment of the whistle.

USAV 8.2: In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the rally is ended. The first referee must make a ruling that will not penalize either team.

8.3 BALL “IN”

The ball is “in” when it touches the floor of the playing court including the boundary lines.

8.4 BALL “OUT”

The ball is “out” when:

- 8.4.1 the part of the ball which contacts the floor is completely outside the boundary lines;
- 8.4.2 it touches an object outside the court, the ceiling or a person out of play;

USAV 8.4.2: A ball, other than a served ball, shall remain in play if it contacts the ceiling or other overhead objects 4.6 m (15') or more above the playing area.

- a. If benches, bleachers, low-hanging baskets or other floor obstructions are fewer than 2 m (6'6 3/4") from the court and interfere with play of the ball, the ball becomes out of play and a playover may be*

directed at the first referee's discretion.

- b. The ball is out of play when:
 - i. Rule 10.1.2 is not in effect, and the ball makes contact with the ceiling or obstruction above the opponent's playing area.*
 - ii. Rule 10.1.2 is in effect, and a ball that cannot be legally retrieved from the opponent's free zone contacts the ceiling or obstruction over the opponent's playing area.*
 - iii. The ball contacts the ceiling or obstruction above the team's playing area and crosses the plane of the net into the opponent's court.**
- c. A ball, other than a served ball, is out of play and a playover directed if it contacts overhead object(s) or the supports (e.g., basketball backboard) fewer than 4.6 m (15') above the playing area and would have remained playable if the object had not been present.*
- d. A ball is out of play if it contacts the ceiling or overhead objects, regardless of height, over non-playing areas.*
- e. A ball is out of play and a playover is directed if the ball comes to rest on an overhead object above the team's playing area and is still a playable ball.*
- f. If an official, media equipment or personnel or spectator interferes with a player's legal attempt to play the ball, a playover shall be directed.*

- 8.4.3 it touches the antennae, ropes, posts or the net itself outside the side bands;
- 8.4.4 it crosses the vertical plane of the net either partially or totally outside the crossing space, except in the case of Rule 10.1.2;
- 8.4.5 it crosses completely the lower space under the net.

9. PLAYING THE BALL

Each team must play within its own playing area and space (except Rule 10.1.2). The ball may, however, be retrieved from beyond the free zone.

USAV 9: The ball may be retrieved from beyond the free zone when the surface change is 1.25 cm (1/2") or fewer, the secondary surface is lower than the free zone and the area is free of obstructions.

If obstructions or other safety concerns prohibit retrieval from beyond the free zone, the player retrieving a ball over a non-playing area must be in contact with the playing surface when contact with the ball is made.

Non-playing areas are defined as the: (1) walls, bleachers or other spectator seating areas; (2) team benches and any area behind the team benches; (3) area between the scorer's table and the team benches; (4) any other area outlined in the pre-match conference by the first referee. [Rule 23.2.5]

- a. *If nets or dividers are separating courts, only the player attempting to play the ball may move the net or divider to play the ball.*
- b. *When competition is scheduled or is occurring on adjacent court(s), it is a fault for a player to enter the adjacent court(s) to play a ball or after playing a ball. The free zone, including the service zone on an adjacent court, is a playable area.*

9.1 TEAM HITS

A hit is any contact with the ball by a player in play. The team is entitled to a maximum of three hits (in addition to blocking, Rule 14.4.1), for returning the ball. If more are used, the team commits the fault of: "FOUR HITS."

9.1.1 CONSECUTIVE CONTACTS

A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively (except Rules 9.2.3, 14.2 and 14.4.2).

9.1.2 SIMULTANEOUS CONTACTS

Two or three players may touch the ball at the same moment.

9.1.2.1 When two (three) teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as two (three) hits (with the exception of blocking). If they reach for the ball, but only one of them touches it, one hit is counted. A collision of players does not constitute a fault.

USAV 9.1.2.1: USAV is testing this rule. When two or more teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as one hit. If teammates collide, no fault is committed. Any player may play the ball next if the simultaneous hit is not the third team hit.

9.1.2.2 When two opponents touch the ball simultaneously over the net and the ball remains in play, the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits. If such a ball goes “out,” it is the fault of the team on the opposite side.

9.1.2.3 If simultaneous hits by two opponents over the net lead to extended contact with the ball, play continues.

9.1.3 ASSISTED HIT

Within the playing area, a player is not permitted to take support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to hit the ball.

However, a player who is about to commit a fault (touch the net or cross the center line, etc.) may be stopped or held back by a teammate.

9.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT

9.2.1 The ball may touch any part of the body.

- 9.2.2 The ball must not be caught and/or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.
- 9.2.3 The ball may touch various parts of the body, provided that the contacts take place simultaneously.

Exceptions:

- 9.2.3.1 At blocking, consecutive contacts may be made by one or more blocker(s) provided that the contacts occur during one action;
- 9.2.3.2 At the first hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively provided that the contacts occur during one action.

9.3 FAULTS IN PLAYING THE BALL

- 9.3.1 **FOUR HITS:** a team hits the ball four times before returning it.
- 9.3.2 **ASSISTED HIT:** a player takes support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to hit the ball within the playing area.
- 9.3.3 **CATCH:** the ball is caught and/or thrown; it does not rebound from the hit.
- 9.3.4 **DOUBLE CONTACT:** a player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body in succession.

10. BALL AT THE NET

10.1 BALL CROSSING THE NET

- 10.1.1 The ball sent to the opponent's court must go over the net within the crossing space. The crossing space is the part of the vertical plane of the net limited as follows:
 - 10.1.1.1 below, by the top of the net;
 - 10.1.1.2 at the sides, by the antennae, and their imaginary extension;
 - 10.1.1.3 above, by the ceiling.

- 10.1.2 The ball that has crossed the net plane to the opponent's free zone totally or partly through the external space may be played back within the team hits, provided that:

USAV 10.1.2: A minimum of 2 m (6'6 3/4") clearance beyond the court equipment on both sides is required.

- 10.1.2.1 the opponent's court is not touched by the player;
- 10.1.2.2 the ball, when played back, crosses the net plane again totally or partly through the external space on the same side of the court. The opponent team may not prevent such action.
- 10.1.3 The ball that is heading towards the opponent's court through the lower space is in play until the moment it has completely crossed the vertical plane of the net.

10.2 BALL TOUCHING THE NET

While crossing the net, the ball may touch it.

10.3 BALL IN THE NET

- 10.3.1 A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits.
- 10.3.2 If the ball rips the mesh of the net or tears it down, the rally is cancelled and replayed.

11. PLAYER AT THE NET

11.1 REACHING BEYOND THE NET

- 11.1.1 In blocking, a blocker may touch the ball beyond the net, provided that he/she does not interfere with the opponent's play before or during the latter's attack hit.
- 11.1.2 After an attack hit, a player is permitted to pass his/her hand beyond the net, provided that the contact has been made within his/her own playing space.

11.2 PENETRATION UNDER THE NET

- 11.2.1 It is permitted to penetrate into the opponent's space under the net, provided that this does not interfere with the opponent's play.
- 11.2.2 Penetration into the opponent's court, beyond the center line:
 - 11.2.2.1 To touch the opponent's court with a foot (feet) is permitted, provided that some part of the penetrating foot (feet) remains either in contact with or directly above the center line;
 - 11.2.2.2 To touch the opponent's court with any part of the body above the feet is permitted provided that it does not interfere with the opponent's play.
- 11.2.3 A player may enter the opponent's court after the ball goes out of play.
- 11.2.4 Players may penetrate into the opponent's free zone provided that they do not interfere with the opponent's play.

11.3 CONTACT WITH THE NET

- 11.3.1 Contact with the net by a player is not a fault, unless it interferes with the play.
- 11.3.2 Players may touch the post, ropes, or any other object outside the antennae, including the net itself, provided that it does not interfere with play.
- 11.3.3 When the ball is driven into the net, causing it to touch an opponent, no fault is committed.

11.4 PLAYER'S FAULTS AT THE NET

- 11.4.1 A player touches the ball or an opponent in the opponent's space before or during the opponent's attack hit.
- 11.4.2 A player interferes with the opponent's play while penetrating into the opponent's space under the net.

- 11.4.3 A player's foot (feet) penetrates completely into the opponent's court.
- 11.4.4 A player interferes with the opponent's play by (amongst others):
- touching the top band of the net or the top 80 cm (2' 7.49") of the antenna during his/her action of playing the ball, or
 - taking support from the net simultaneously with playing the ball, or
 - creating an advantage over the opponent, or
 - making actions which hinder an opponent's legitimate attempt to play the ball.

12. SERVICE

The service is the act of putting the ball into play, by the back-right player, placed in the service zone.

12.1 FIRST SERVICE IN A SET

- 12.1.1 The first service of the first set, as well as that of the deciding set (the 5th) is executed by the team determined by the toss.
- 12.1.2 The other sets will be started with the service of the team that did not serve first in the previous set.

12.2 SERVICE ORDER

- 12.2.1 The players must follow the service order recorded on the line-up sheet.
- 12.2.2 After the first service in a set, the player to serve is determined as follows:
- 12.2.2.1 when the serving team wins the rally, the player (or his/her substitute) who served before serves again;
 - 12.2.2.2 when the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve and rotates be-

fore actually serving. The player who moves from the front-right position to the back-right position will serve.

12.3 AUTHORIZATION OF THE SERVICE

The first referee authorizes the service, after having checked that the two teams are ready to play and that the server is in possession of the ball.

USAV 12.3: The server shall be on the playing surface to receive authorization for service.

12.4 EXECUTION OF THE SERVICE

12.4.1 The ball shall be hit with one hand or any part of the arm after being tossed or released from the hand(s).

12.4.2 Only one toss or release of the ball is allowed. Dribbling or moving the ball in the hands is permitted.

12.4.3 At the moment of the service hit or take-off for a jump service, the server must not touch the court (the end line included) or the floor outside the service zone. After the hit, he/she may step or land outside the service zone, or inside the court.

USAV 12.4.3: The entire service action must take place on the playing area.

12.4.4 The server must hit the ball within 8 seconds after the first referee whistles for service.

USAV 12.4.4: For 14-and-under age groups:

- The server must contact the ball within 5 seconds after the first referee whistles for service.*
- 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 service again (re-serve) and the server must execute it within the next 5 seconds.*

d. One service tossing error is permitted for each service.

- 12.4.5 A service executed before the referee's whistle is cancelled and repeated.

USAV 12.4.5: After the whistle for the service, no other actions (requests for line-up check, time-out, substitution, etc.) may be considered until after the ball has been served and the rally completed. This is true even if a request has been made after a server has initiated service action and legally permitted the ball to fall to the floor. A re-serve is considered to be part of a single effort to serve and must be completed before any requests may be considered.

12.5 SCREENING

- 12.5.1 The players of the serving team must not prevent their opponent, through individual or collective screening, from seeing the server or the flight path of the ball.
- 12.5.2 A player, or group of players, of the serving team makes a screen by waving arms, jumping or moving sideways, during the execution of the service, or by standing grouped to hide the flight path of the ball.

USAV 12.5.2: The factors to be weighed when judging whether a screen has been committed are the: (a) relative positions of the players on the serving team; (b) path of the serve; (c) speed of the serve; and (d) trajectory of the serve. If the players of the serving team are positioned close to each other, the serve passes over these players, is fast and has a low trajectory, the probability is greater that a screen has been committed. The probability that a screen has been committed is lower if the: (a) players of the serving team are not positioned close to each other or are attempting to prevent the commission of a screen (i.e., bending

over); (b) path of the serve is not over the players; (c) speed of the serve is slow; or (d) trajectory of the serve is high.

12.6 FAULTS MADE DURING THE SERVICE

12.6.1 Serving faults

The following faults lead to a change of service even if the opponent is out of position. The server:

12.6.1.1 violates the service order;

12.6.1.2 does not execute the service properly.

USAV 12.6.1.2: It is a serving fault if the service toss touches any obstruction before the service contact.

12.6.2 Faults after the service hit

After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault (unless a player is out of position) if the ball:

12.6.2.1 touches a player of the serving team or fails to cross the vertical plane of the net completely through the crossing space;

12.6.2.2 goes "out";

12.6.2.3 passes over a screen.

USAV 12.6.2: After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault if the ball touches any overhead obstruction.

12.7 SERVING FAULTS AND POSITIONAL FAULTS

12.7.1 If the server makes a fault at the moment of the service hit (improper execution, wrong rotational order, etc.) and the opponent is out of position, it is the serving fault which is sanctioned.

12.7.2 Instead, if the execution of the service has been correct, but the service subsequently becomes faulty (goes out, goes over a screen, etc.), the positional fault has taken place first and is sanctioned.

13. ATTACK HIT

13.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ATTACK HIT

- 13.1.1 All actions which direct the ball toward the opponents, with the exception of service and block, are considered as attack hits.
- 13.1.2 During an attack hit, tipping is permitted only if the ball is cleanly hit, and not caught or thrown.
- 13.1.3 An attack hit is completed at the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by an opponent.

13.2 RESTRICTIONS OF THE ATTACK HIT

- 13.2.1 A front-row player may complete an attack hit at any height, provided that the contact with the ball has been made within the player's own playing space (except Rule 13.2.4).
- 13.2.2 A back-row player may complete an attack hit at any height from behind the front zone:
 - 13.2.2.1 at his/her take-off, the player's foot (feet) must neither have touched nor crossed over the attack line;
 - 13.2.2.2 after his/her hit, the player may land within the front zone.
- 13.2.3 A back-row player may also complete an attack hit from the front zone, if at the moment of the contact part of the ball is lower than the top of the net.
- 13.2.4 No player is permitted to complete an attack hit on the opponent's service, when the ball is in the front zone and entirely higher than the top of the net.

13.3 FAULTS OF THE ATTACK HIT

- 13.3.1 A player hits the ball within the playing space of the opposing team.
- 13.3.2 A player hits the ball "out."
- 13.3.3 A back-row player completes an attack hit from the front zone, if at the moment of the hit the ball is

- entirely higher than the top of the net.
- 13.3.4 A player completes an attack hit on the opponent's service, when the ball is in the front zone and entirely higher than the top of the net.
- 13.3.5 A Libero completes an attack hit if at the moment of the hit the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net.
- 13.3.6 A player completes an attack hit from higher than the top of the net when the ball is coming from an overhand finger pass by a Libero in his/her front zone.

USAV 13.3 If an attack-hit fault occurs simultaneously with a blocking fault by the opponents, a double fault is committed.

14. BLOCK

14.1 BLOCKING

- 14.1.1 Blocking is the action of players close to the net to intercept the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net, regardless of the height of the ball contact. Only front-row players are permitted to complete a block, but at the moment of contact with the ball, part of the body must be higher than the top of the net.
- 14.1.2 Block Attempt
A block attempt is the action of blocking without touching the ball.
- 14.1.3 Completed Block
A block is completed whenever the ball is touched by a blocker.
- 14.1.4 Collective Block
A collective block is executed by two or three players close to each other and is completed when one of them touches the ball.

14.2 BLOCK CONTACT

Consecutive (quick and continuous) contacts with the ball may occur by one or more blockers provided that the contacts are made during one action.

USAV 14.2: A block is the interception of a ball coming from the opponents. Accordingly, it is a double contact fault if a player has successive contacts while using a blocking action when directing a ball toward the opponent during the execution of the second or third team hit.

14.3 BLOCKING WITHIN THE OPPONENT'S SPACE

In blocking, the player may place his/her hands and arms beyond the net provided that this action does not interfere with the opponent's play. Thus, it is not permitted to touch the ball beyond the net until an opponent has executed an attack hit.

USAV 14.3: Blocking the ball beyond the net above the opponent's team area shall be permitted, provided:

- a. the block is made after the opponents have hit the ball in such a manner that the ball would, in the first referee's judgment, clearly cross the net if not touched by a player, and no member of the attacking team is in a position to make a play on the ball.*
- b. the ball is falling near the net, and no member of the attacking team could, in the first referee's judgment, make a play on the ball.*

14.4 BLOCK AND TEAM HITS

14.4.1 A block contact is not counted as a team hit. Consequently, after a block contact, a team is entitled to three hits to return the ball.

14.4.2 The first hit after the block may be executed by any player, including the one who has touched the ball during the block.

14.5 BLOCKING THE SERVICE

To block an opponent's service is forbidden.

14.6 BLOCKING FAULTS

- 14.6.1 The blocker touches the ball in the opponent's space either before or simultaneously with the opponent's attack hit.
- 14.6.2 A back-row player or a Libero completes a block or participates in a completed block.
- 14.6.3 Blocking the opponent's service.
- 14.6.4 The ball is sent "out" off the block.
- 14.6.5 Blocking the ball in the opponent's space from outside the antenna.
- 14.6.6 A Libero attempts an individual or collective block.

USAV 14.6: If a blocking fault is committed simultaneously with an attack-hit fault by the opponent, a double fault is committed and the rally shall be replayed.