

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING INDOOR TOURNAMENTS/LEAGUES

To assure maximum efficiency and consistency throughout USA Volleyball in the conduct of sanctioned competition, as well as fair and equitable treatment of teams and players, principles and guidelines have been established by USA Volleyball. These Guidelines should be considered as the national minimum standard and should be an integral part of the sanction agreement with USA Volleyball and/or the Regional Volleyball Association.

It is recognized that not all organizations and facilities have the minimum resources available to meet these minimum standards continually. In these cases, reasonable alternatives should be provided.

The rules offer many options to allow for a wide range of use. It is the responsibility of the Tournament or League Director to specify in writing which options or modifications to the rules will be enforced. Players must be notified of all Tournament/League Regulations prior to the start of play and preferably before the acceptance of any entries.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All tournament regulations must be within the guidelines of the governing organization.
2. Common sense may dictate that adaptations to the rules may enhance the playing experience in certain situations.
3. All adaptations to the rules and tournament guidelines must be for the improvement of the game for the participants involved. Principles of fairness and increased participation should guide decisions to adapt playing rules.

4. When in doubt, contact the volleyball authority within your organization.

B. APPLICATION/PREPARATION

1. Tournament Directors should apply for and receive sanction from their respective state, regional or national authority. Requests for any waivers to the rules should be submitted to the appropriate authority at this time or as soon as the need has been determined.
2. Obtain the correct forms and equipment to have available at the site such as:
 - a. Appropriate equipment (nets, standards, antennae, volleyball, etc.) to conduct competition consistent with the rules.
 - b. A copy of the current Domestic Competition Regulations and any specific tournament/league guidelines.
 - c. USA Volleyball scoresheets, line-up sheets and Libero tracking sheets. These may be printed from the web site at www.usavolleyball.org or purchased through the on-line store.
3. For large, multi-court tournaments, the following is recommended:
 - a. A non-playing tournament director/manager with the sole responsibility of keeping the tournament on schedule and properly recorded; OR
 - b. A court manager for every 1-4 courts, all of whom are collectively charged with the above responsibilities; AND
 - c. A non-playing certified referee in charge who shall be designated to handle all referee assignments.
 - d. The duties of the Head Referee may include identifying a protest committee and working with the tournament director to identify ground rules. He/she may also be charged with setting a referee

- schedule when certified match officials are used.
4. For smaller tournaments and leagues, some of these duties may be combined.
 - a. A one-court facility may require only one person to act as the site director and the referee.
 - b. A two- to four-court facility with a paid referee on each court might require only one tournament/league director, who may also act as head official.

C. FEES/AWARDS

1. Each tournament situation is unique. The entry fee should be commensurate with expenses incurred. Some considerations should be:
 - a. paid officials,
 - b. cost of facilities, equipment and administrative supplies/costs,
 - c. awards,
 - d. sale of food items, merchandise, etc., to help defray expenses,
 - e. contribution to USA Volleyball Foundation, Endowment Fund or other charity,
 - f. payment of expenses to team(s).
2. Selection of awards is generally dependent upon the number of teams entered, the age of the participants and the financial resources available. Awards may include:
 - a. team trophies or plaques,
 - b. individual awards such as medals, plaques, t-shirts or other merchandise,
 - c. money back in the form of expenses or future tournament entry fees.

D. TYPES OF TOURNAMENTS

1. Double Elimination: Because of the obviously limited play potential for the weaker teams, this type of tournament is discouraged.
2. Round Robin: This is more universally accepted because all teams are guaranteed a reasonable number of sets/matches. It also is more practical for the assignment of support officials. A multi-court round robin in the same division/class will require a championship playoff. A single-court round robin does not require a playoff. Such an arrangement is discouraged.
3. Many large national-level and festival-type tournaments have more than one round of pool play (round robin) culminating in a single- or double-elimination round.

E. SCHEDULING PARAMETERS

1. Scheduling matches for a tournament must be realistic. These time allowances provide for a six-minute warm-up between matches and three minutes between sets. Although playing formats may be adjusted to fit the needs of the tournament, only the results of full matches (two out of three or three out of five 25 rally point sets with the deciding set to 15 rally points) are acceptable for seeding purposes for national-level events.

Two 25 rally point sets	50 minutes
Two 21 rally point sets	45 minutes
2/3 25 rally point sets per match (15-pt. third set)	1 hr. 5 min.
2/3 21 rally point sets per match (15-pt. third set)	1 hour (JOV format)
One 15 rally point set	20 minutes
One 25 rally point set	26 minutes
3/5 25 rally point set per match (15-pt. fifth set)	1 hr. 45 min.

2. At least five additional minutes of warm-up shall be allotted for the first match for each team except in those facilities that provide an adequate warm-up area not in conflict with the playing areas.
3. Teams should play at the announced time when their match is sequentially ready to be played, regardless of the time schedule. The time schedule is only a guideline. EXCEPTION: The first match of the day for each team should be governed by the announced/scheduled starting time only. Some large tournaments (national level) may have their own written guidelines for their tournament schedules. For example, it is standard at large junior tournaments for pool play matches to start at the scheduled time with the provision that a match may start no more than 10 minutes early, provided both playing teams and the referees agree.
4. The tournament schedule and forfeit procedures should be clearly posted and all teams informed.
5. Samples of various round robin schedules (officializing team in parentheses):

4-TEAM	4-TEAM	4-TEAM	4-TEAM	4-TEAM
1 vs. 3 (2)	1 vs. 4 (3)	2 vs. 3 (1)	2 vs. 4 (3)	1 vs. 4 (3)
2 vs. 4 (1)	2 vs. 3 (1)	1 vs. 4 (2)	1 vs. 3 (4)	2 vs. 3 (1)
1 vs. 4 (3)	1 vs. 3 (4)	2 vs. 4 (3)	2 vs. 3 (1)	1 vs. 3 (4)
2 vs. 3 (1)	2 vs. 4 (3)	1 vs. 3 (2)	1 vs. 4 (3)	2 vs. 4 (3)
3 vs. 4 (2)	1 vs. 2 (4)	3 vs. 4 (1)	3 vs. 4 (2)	3 vs. 4 (2)
1 vs. 2 (4)	3 vs. 4 (2)	1 vs. 2 (4)	1 vs. 2 (4)	1 vs. 2 (4)

4-TEAM

- 1 vs. 4 (2)
- 2 vs. 3 (1)
- 1 vs. 3 (4)
- 2 vs. 4 (3)
- 3 vs. 4 (2)
- 1 vs. 2 (3)

5-TEAM

2 vs. 5 (4) 3 vs. 5 (1)
 3 vs. 4 (2) 2 vs. 4 (3)
 1 vs. 5 (3) 1 vs. 3 (5)
 2 vs. 3 (5) 4 vs. 5 (1)
 1 vs. 4 (2) 1 vs. 2 (4)

6 TEAMS ON 2 COURTS

Court 1 Court 2
 4 vs. 6 (1) 3 vs. 5 (2)
 1 vs. 6 (4) 2 vs. 5 (3)
 1 vs. 4 (6) 2 vs. 3 (5)
 4 vs. 5 (1) 3 vs. 6 (2)
 30-minute lunch break
 1 vs. 5 (3) 2 vs. 6 (4)
 1 vs. 3 (5) 2 vs. 4 (6)
 3 vs. 4 (1) 5 vs. 6 (2)
 1 vs. 2 (3)

6 TEAMS ON 2 COURTS

Court 1 Court 2
 1 vs. 6 (4) 2 vs. 5 (3)
 3 vs. 4 (2) 1 vs. 5 (6)
 4 vs. 6 (5) 2 vs. 3 (1)
 1 vs. 4 (6) 3 vs. 5 (2)
 30-minute lunch break
 2 vs. 6 (4) 1 vs. 3 (5)
 2 vs. 4 (1) 5 vs. 6 (3)
 1 vs. 2 (4) 3 vs. 6 (5)
 4 vs. 5 (3)

JOV FORMAT

Round	Four-Team Pools	Three-Team Pools	Five-Team Pools on 2 courts
Match 1	1 vs. 3 (ref 2)	1 vs. 3 (ref 2)	1 vs. 5 and 2 vs. 4 (ref 3)
Match 2	2 vs. 4 (ref 1)	2 vs. 3 (ref 1)	1 vs. 4 and 2 vs. 3 (ref 5)
Match 3	1 vs. 4 (ref 3)	1 vs. 2 (ref 3)	Break
Match 4	2 vs. 3 (ref 1)		1 vs. 3 and 4 vs. 5 (ref 2)
Match 5	3 vs. 4 (ref 2)		2 vs. 5 and 3 vs. 4 (ref 1)
Match 6	1 vs. 2 (ref 4)		1 vs. 2 and 3 vs. 5 (ref 4)

5-TEAM

2 vs. 5 (4) 4 vs. 5 (1)
 1 vs. 4 (3) 2 vs. 3 (4)
 3 vs. 5 (1) 1 vs. 5 (2)
 2 vs. 4 (5) 3 vs. 4 (5)
 1 vs. 3 (2) 1 vs. 2 (3)

7 TEAMS ON 2 COURTS

Court 1 Court 2
 3 vs. 7 (6) 2 vs. 5 (1)
 4 vs. 7 (5) 1 vs. 6 (2)
 4 vs. 5 (7) 2 vs. 3 (6)
 6 vs. 7 (4) 1 vs. 3 (2)
 2 vs. 4 (7) 1 vs. 5 (3)
 30-minute lunch break
 3 vs. 6 (4) 5 vs. 7 (1)
 2 vs. 6 (3) 1 vs. 4 (5)
 2 vs. 7 (6) 3 vs. 5 (1)
 1 vs. 7 (3) 4 vs. 6 (5)
 3 vs. 4 (7) 5 vs. 6 (2)
 1 vs. 2 (4)

F. METHOD OF PLAY

(ONE-DAY TOURNAMENTS)

1. When round robin competition is scheduled, a maximum of five teams only should be accepted per available court.
2. When round robin play qualifies teams for a championship playoff, no more than 50 percent of the teams entered should advance to the championship playoff bracket.
3. The championship bracket is not to exceed eight teams.
4. When two four-team brackets are scheduled, a championship and consolation pool may be formed from a first-round robin competition. Subsequent competition utilizing the top two and bottom two teams will determine first, second, third from the championship pool and fourth place by winning the consolation pool.
5. In round robin play the following will prevail:
 - a. If five teams are entered and a championship playoff is scheduled, matches may consist of either two 21 rally point sets or two 25 rally point sets. Time might not allow the use of either the best of three or three-set matches.
 - b. If five teams are entered and a championship playoff is not scheduled, matches may consist of either two 21 rally point sets or two 25 rally point sets. Time may not allow the use of the best of three or three-set matches.
 - c. If four teams are entered, matches may consist of any format, as long as it meets a reasonable time frame and is fair to all team entries proportionate to their entry fee and travel time. Some options include four-team pool play three sets to 25 rally points or best two-out-of-three 25 rally point sets (15 rally point third set).
 - d. Where there is only one pool, and a total round robin is scheduled, additional matches are not

recommended. If a championship playoff is scheduled, the following criteria should be met:

- (1) Projected time schedule will permit such additional scheduling.
 - (2) Playoffs should be restricted to the first- and second-place teams only.
 - (3) The second-place team should win at least 75 percent of its sets in round robin competition.
6. Finals should be scheduled to begin no later than 9 p.m. and earlier if possible.

G. WARM-UP PROCEDURES

Adult Competition:

1. Usually, because of limited time, the teams preparing to play the next match must be ready to take the court immediately at the end of the previous match. Warm-up time for the teams will probably vary from 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the tournament guidelines.
2. After the coin toss, one of the following warm-up procedures is specified:
 - a. The warm-up time is split evenly in two, with the serving team taking the court for the first half and the receiving team taking the court for the second half. The teams may use the entire court in whatever manner they choose during their time, including serving practice.
 - b. Shared hitting - both teams using the court to practice hitting at the net. The court should be split down the middle, perpendicular to the net so that the teams are hitting from their left side and down the line. Each team may practice blocking its own players. For the safety of the players, the referees should monitor that teams are not hitting into each other. If the teams are unable or unwilling to control their hitting, the referee

would have the teams revert to the previous option a or c. Shared hitting/serving is usually prohibited at Junior events.

- c. A variation of “a” and “b” is to allow both teams to serve together for the last minute or two of warm-up. For example, if the total warm-up time is five minutes, the teams would share the court for four minutes and serve together for one minute (option a) or each would use the court for two minutes separately and then serve together for one minute (option b).
- d. Pre-match Protocol for Adult Open Divisions can be found on page 194.

Junior Competition:

1. For National Junior Volleyball events, the 2-4-4 format is used and may be used at any event. The first two minutes are for ball handling on a team’s own side of the court, followed by four minutes of the entire court use by the serving team and then 4 minutes for the receiving team. Serving is conducted during each team’s four minutes. Pre-match Protocol for the Junior National Championships can be found on page 195.

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF PLAYOFF POSITION(S) IF TIED – METHOD ONE

1. Teams qualifying for the playoffs, but tied for position only, should not compete in a playoff set to determine position; rather, position assignment should be determined by the priority system listed below based on point differential to the extent possible.
 - a. Results of the match(es) between the tied teams, first on the won-lost record, and second on the point spread. If still tied, then;
 - b. comparison of the point differential based on the total round robin competition. Point differential

should be determined by subtracting the total points lost from the total points won. The highest plus or the lowest minus remainder should be considered the superior team for tie-breaking purposes. If still tied, then;

- c. coin toss.
2. If there are more teams tied for the playoffs than there are positions, the tied teams must compete for the position(s) in further direct competition. Teams should NOT be eliminated from assignment to championship competition by point differential or any other non-competition system.
3. If two or more teams are tied for a single playoff position, the minimum number of one additional 25 rally point set should be played. Teams should change sides at 13 points. No cap shall be in effect. Where tournament guidelines stipulate, 15-point sets may be used. For example:
 - a. Two teams tie for last position: One 25 rally point set.
 - b. Three teams tie for last position: Superior as determined by the criteria in G1 shall be the bye team and play the winner of the match between the two remaining teams. Two 25 rally point sets total.
 - c. Four teams tie for last position: As determined by the criteria in G1, team 1 vs. 4, 2 vs. 3 and winners playoff. Three 25 rally point sets total.
4. If three teams tie for two playoff positions, the team with the greater point spread shall be awarded first place. The other two teams shall play one 25 rally point set for the remaining playoff position. The same priorities as listed in G1 shall prevail, except that if a tie shall exist after the second priority, the flip of a coin shall determine the bye team, and all teams must play for position as follows:
 - a. Team Blue wins over Team White and gains one playoff berth.

- b. Team Red plays the loser, in this case Team White, for the second playoff berth. Two 25 rally point sets total.
5. These are only guidelines. Other methods are acceptable, as long as they are printed and distributed before the start of the event.

I. TIE BREAKER PROCEDURES FOR NATIONAL-LEVEL JUNIOR COMPETITION

Check the USAV website for the most updated procedure for specific events including National Qualifiers and National Championship Events. At the conclusion of a pool, teams in the pool will be ranked according to their match records. If a tie-in-match record exists between two or more teams, tie(s) will be broken using these USA Junior National Tie Break Formats for competition in which there is an opportunity to win a bid. The following policies apply to all tie-breaking situations:

- Divisions playing 3-out-of-5 sets: If there are more teams tied by match record for advancing positions into the Gold Level than there are available positions, advancement will be decided by the win/loss ratio for the total number of sets played in the pool. If a tie still exists, the remaining tie-breaking procedures will be followed.

- All tie-breaking sets will be played to 25 points, with one team winning by two points and no point cap.

- In a tie breaker situation of three teams or more, if more than one team leaves the site, the remaining teams will play for position. The team(s) that left will be placed lower than the team(s) that remained. The position of all teams that left the site will be decided following the tie breaker procedure for non-gold division divisions (set percentage, point w/l, and coin flip).

Two-way Ties (two teams tied in match record)

The first place team will be the team that won the pool play match between the two tied teams (head-to-head).

This procedure will be used for all two-way ties, even when there is an opportunity to win a bid. The rationale is that the tied teams have already determined the better team through head-to-head competition.

Three-way Ties (three teams tied in match record)

There are several situations in which three-ways ties can occur. The resolution for each tie-breaking situation depends on:

- The number of teams that will advance from the pool.
- Which pool placement finish is at stake for the tied teams.
- For tie breaking purposes, all ties will be broken using match % as the first criteria, including those cases where a third set is played regardless of the outcome of the first two sets.

Scenario One

No. Teams Advancing	Pool Finish	Applications
1	First place	4-team pools: All teams have 2-1 match records 3-team pools: All teams have 1-1 match records

•All three teams will participate in tie-breaking sets. The seeds for the tie-breaking playoffs will be determined in this order:

1. Win/loss ratio of the total number of sets played in the pool: Sets won divided by total sets played.
2. Point percentage: Each team's total points scored divided by the total points scored by the team's opponents in that pool.
3. Coin toss.

•Set 1: the #2 seed will play the #3 seed and the #1 seed will officiate. The loser of Set 1 will be third place in the pool and will officiate the next tie-breaking set.

•Set 2: the winner of Set 1 will play the #1 seed and the loser of Set 1 will officiate. The winner of Set 2 will be first in

the pool and the loser will be second.

If one of the teams in a three-way tied pool leaves the site before the determination that a tie-break is necessary, that team will automatically become the third-place team and the other two teams will play one tie-breaking set.

Scenario Two

No. Teams Advancing	Pool Finish	Applications
2	First place	4-team pools: All teams have 2-1 match records 3-team pools: All teams have 1-1 match records

•The seeds for the tie-breaking playoffs will be determined in this order:

1. Win/loss ratio of the total number of sets played in the pool: Sets won divided by total sets played.
2. Point percentage: Each team's total points scored divided by the total points scored by the team's opponents in that pool.
3. Coin toss.

•The #1 seed does not have a playoff set. The #1 seed finishes first in the pool.

•The #2 seed will play the #3 seed and the #1 seed will officiate. The winner will be second place in the pool and the loser of this set will be third place in the pool.

If one of the teams in a three-way tied pool leaves the site that team will be ranked third in the pool. The remaining two teams will finish first and second in the pool based on the tie-break seeding process. No other penalty will be applied and no tie-breaking set is played.

Scenario Three

No. Teams Advancing	Pool Finish	Applications
2	Second place	4-team pools: All teams have 1-2 match records

•All three teams will participate in tie-breaking sets. The seeds for the tie-breaking playoffs will be determined in this order:

1. Win/loss ratio of the total number of sets played in the pool: Sets won divided by total sets played.
2. Point percentage: Each team's total points scored divided by the total points scored by the team's opponents in that pool.
3. Coin toss.

•Set 1: the #2 seed will play the #3 seed and the #1 seed will officiate. The loser of Set 1 will be fourth place in the pool and will officiate the next tie-breaking set.

•Set 2: the winner of Set 1 will play the #1 seed and the loser of Set 1 will officiate. The winner of Set 2 will be first in the pool and the loser will be third.

If one of the teams in a three-way tied pool leaves the site before the determination of a tie-break is necessary, that team will automatically become the fourth-place team and the other two teams will play one tie-breaking set.

Scenario Four

No. Teams Advancing	Pool Finish	Applications
3	Second place	4-team pools: All teams have 1-2 match records

•The seeds for the tie-breaking playoffs will be determined in this order:

1. Win/loss ratio of the total number of sets played in the pool: Sets won divided by total sets played.

2. Point percentage: Each team's total points scored divided by the total points scored by the team's opponents in that pool.
3. Coin toss.

- The #1 seed does not have a playoff set. The #1 seed finishes second in the pool.

- The #2 seed will play the #3 seed and the #1 seed will officiate. The winner will be third place in the pool and the loser of this set will be fourth place in the pool.

If one of the teams in a three-way tied pool leaves the site and does not fulfill the officiating assignment, that team will be ranked fourth in the pool. The remaining two teams will finish second and third in the pool based on the tie-break seeding process. No other penalty will be applied and no tie-breaking set is played.

Non-elimination Scenarios

If no team is eliminated from an opportunity to win a bid, there will be no tie-breaking sets. In three-way ties, ties will be broken, without repetition, in this order:

1. Pool match record.
2. Head-to-head results.
3. Set percentage: Sets won divided by total sets played.
4. Point percentage: Each team's total points scored divided by the total points scored by the team's opponents in that pool.
5. Coin toss.

J. DUTIES OF COURT MANAGERS

1. The court manager is responsible for getting matches and officials on and off the court.
2. The officials for each match at major tournaments include a first referee, second referee, scorer, assistant scorer, timekeeper/visual scoreboard operator and two line judges.

3. The court manager needs to check equipment (nets, standards, volleyballs, antennas, etc.) to make certain they are in good condition at all times.

K. PROCUREMENT/ASSIGNMENT OF REFEREES

1. All referees assigned to sanctioned USA Volleyball or Regional competition should be duly certified USA Volleyball referees unless otherwise approved by the Regional Referees Chair.
2. Non-player certified referees, as well as available certified player referees, may be used in all sanctioned competition.
3. All non-player USAV certified referees are required to wear the approved volleyball officials' uniform.
4. All match assignments shall be made by the designated Chief Referee. In the absence of a Chief Referee, the Tournament Director will act in this capacity.
5. Other organizations that sponsor volleyball activities may want to contact the USA Volleyball Regional Commissioner or Referees Chair to obtain clinic and certification information and gain access to the USA Volleyball certified officials in the area.

L. ASSIGNMENT OF SUPPORT OFFICIALS

1. The primary responsibility for the assignment of support officials should lie with the Tournament Director.
2. Participating teams may be expected to furnish required support officials as requested. Required officials are the second referee, the scorer, the assistant scorer, two line judges and visual scoreboard operator. It is recommended that only USA Volleyball certified scorers should serve in the capacity of scorer.
3. A working schedule, including playoff sets, should be posted prior to the first match of the day so teams will be properly informed as to respective responsibilities. In

addition, teams assigned to work the first scheduled matches should be notified at least three days in advance of the tournament. Those work teams failing to meet this obligation may be subject to discipline within their organization.

4. As part of item “3” above, teams playing in the final round robin match of the day, if not otherwise a participating team, will be assigned to the first level of the playoff matches. Losers of the playoff matches will be required to work the next level of the playoffs. Teams not fulfilling these assignments may be subject to discipline within their organization.
5. Any penalties for teams that do not fulfill their officiating responsibilities should be posted prior to play. One commonly used method is to penalize the assigned officiating team one point per minute up to a maximum of 25 points (one set), which would be imposed at the beginning of the team's next match.