



PacWest Volleyball 2026-27: Referee Guidelines

Volleyball Canada rules are in effect, with the following clarifications and exceptions.

1. Libero

- The libero may be the team captain or game captain.
- Zero, one, or two liberos are permitted per team, per set (the liberos must be specified on the line-up card at the beginning of each set).
- Liberos may be redesignated between sets (i.e., there could be 10 liberos per team in a 5 set match).
- If a team is using two liberos and one libero is injured, the team goes down to one libero for the remainder of the set and then may redesignate two new liberos in the next set.
- If a team is using one libero and that libero is injured, that libero may be redesignated immediately, but the injured player may not play for the remainder of the match. The team may again redesignate libero(s) after that set..

2. Assistant Coach - Standing

- Either assistant coach may stand during play, but only one at a time.
- Only the assistant coach(es) listed on the score sheet may stand during play.
- One Assistant Coach will be allowed to stand and move freely in the free zone, including the warmup zone. He or she will be allowed to communicate with athletes on the bench and on the court while standing, as long as he or she returns to a seated position in a timely manner.
- An assistant coach standing for the purpose of disputing the referee's decisions will be sanctioned according to the rules.

3. Substitutions

- 12 **limited** sub rule will be in effect for men and women.

4. Centre Line

- In the event that the setter, in the act of moving away from the net to make the second contact, crosses the centre line, no fault is called unless there is interference on the play.

5. Player personnel

- Teams are permitted to have 18 players on their roster. All 18 may warm up, but a maximum of 14 players may be on the score sheet roster. Non-roster players must be seated on the bench and may not be wearing team jerseys. All 14 players on the scoresheet roster may be in the warmup area. The 14 players needs to be determined and submitted to the scorekeeper by the start of the official warm-up (25 minutes out from match start time).
- If non-registered players enter the match, it is the responsibility of the team. Cancellation of points will occur consistent with the rules as in the case of an illegal player entering the match.
- A maximum of 8 “non-players” may be on the bench. If a team has 18 players, then the maximum bench personnel will be 26 people. If a team has 15 players, one will sit on the bench not in uniform, plus up to 8 more for a total of 23. Kids, recruits, etc. are not permitted. All conduct from anyone on the bench must be consistent with the rules. Misconduct from anyone on the bench is subject to sanctions.

6. Captain's bar





- The team captain is not required to start the match with a bar under their number.

7. Warmup Area

- Officials should supervise the warm-up areas but not “police” them.
- Celebrations by the bench are allowed that are respectful to both referees and opposing teams (i.e. celebrating big plays and not a missed serve), and done in a way that does not disturb the game. Players are not permitted to enter on to the playing court and wherever they do go, they must return to the warm-up area in time so there is no delay in the game.

8. Volleyball Canada Warm-Up Protocol

- Will not be used.
- Teams may use the free zone behind the team that is using the court provided they do not interfere with the on-court warm up.
- Gym staff to be instructed to participate in warm-ups and to pay special attention to safety concerns of athletes ie not rolling balls under the net.

9. Conduct

- Players will be allowed to serve the ball without any noise (shouting/animal/bird etc.) interference from opposing teams that is deemed to be unsportsmanlike by the referee.
- During the service.
 - Participants may use “Usual and Regular communication” during the authorization and completion of the service.
 - Participants that use “Usual and Regular communication” to distract the server, should be warned against the Serve in Silence rules. Sanctions could include delays or misconduct following the sanction scale.
- Minor misconduct offences are not subject to sanctions. It is the first referee’s duty to prevent the teams from approaching the sanctioning level. This is done in two stages:
 - Stage 1: by issuing a verbal warning through the game captain;
 - Stage 2: by use of a YELLOW CARD to the team member(s) concerned.
- Incorrect conduct by a team member towards officials, opponents, team-mates or spectators is classified in three categories according to the seriousness of the offence.
 - Rude Conduct: action contrary to good manners or moral principles. (RED CARD)
 - Offensive Conduct: defamatory or insulting words or gestures or any action expressing contempt. (RED CARD and YELLOW CARD shown together).
 - Aggression: actual physical attack or aggressive or threatening behaviour. (RED CARD and YELLOW CARD shown apart).

10. Protests

- Protests of league matches are not permitted.
- The referee’s decisions regarding ballhandling faults are not open to protest.
- As a First Referee, please remember, being proactive is always good policy: the 1st Referee must ensure that all practicable steps have been taken to ensure that a protest is not necessary or reached. Tools to achieve this include.
 - The VC rule book, VC and PacWest guidelines are regularly reviewed and all relevant VBC high performance training is completed.
 - Communicating clearly to players the nature of the fault / basis of decision.





- Repetition of hand signals where appropriate.
- Consultation with all relevant officials applicable to the application / interpretation of the rule(s).

11. Match Protocol

- Pre-match.
 - Volleyball Canada score sheets must be used for all league and playoff matches. Player names are to be entered on score sheets in ascending numerical order. A \$25 fine will be levied to the institution(s) (host and/or away team) for failing to meet this requirement. (You will be permitted up to 2 numbers out of sequence, before a fine is levied).
 - Teams get a 25 minute warm-up on the court from the time that the net has been adjusted by the event staff and then checked by the officials. There should be no interruptions to the warm-up during this 25 minute warm up period.
 - At 15 minutes captains are called for the coin toss
 - At 12 minutes – 5 minutes on the court for the serving team (includes serving)
 - At 7 minutes – 5 minutes on the court for the receiving team (includes serving)
 - At 2 minutes the teams return to their bench for the singing of the National Anthem.
 - As soon as the Anthem is finished, the STARTERS are to line up on the end lines for introductions of starting line-ups and officials.
 - As soon as the introductions are complete the officials will signal the teams to proceed to the net, captains go first.
 - At 0 minutes match starts
- During the match
 - Players can re-enter the court during the timeout (not wait for 2nd official to whistle them in).
 - Ball warm-up is permitted during set intervals and time-outs in the free zone.
 - If a sweat has created a hazard on the court, the players on the court must act quickly to inform the 2nd official and not delay the match more than necessary. If the sweat is not deemed to be a hazard, delay sanctions may be applied.
 - NO WARM-UP shall take place in the same gym while a match is in progress.
 - Set Intervals
 - 3 minutes duration once officials signal “end of set”.
 - Coaches must submit subsequent set line-up immediately.
 - 30 seconds remaining, officials will whistle for teams to enter the court.
 - Official will check the starting line-up.
 - 00 seconds remaining officials whistle for authorization of service.
- Post-match
 - Following a match, at the official’s signal, players and coaches will proceed to the area in front of the scorer’s table to shake hands with opposing players and coaching staff. Coaches and captains only should shake hands with the officials.
 - Only after both teams have left the playing surface, are the teams that are playing in the following match permitted to take the floor.

12. Coin Toss

- To start the match
 - The team captain that wins the coin toss will choose to serve/ receive the other team captain has no choice for side.
- To start the deciding set





- The team captain that wins the coin toss will choose to serve/ receive or side. The team captain that doesn't win the coin toss has the choice of whatever remains.

13. 2026 Rules Interpretation

- The Ceiling
 - The ceiling will remain out of play for the 2026-27 season. If the ball hits the ceiling it is considered out and play ends immediately.
- Internal Pass (Double Contact) Interpretation
 - During internal passes (second contact), double contacts made with an overhand finger action will not be punished, if made during one action and the ball remains on the same side of the court. However, double contacts made during completed attack hits (completely crossing the plane of the net or contacting the opponent block) will be called as faults.
 - Rule text specific to double contact is unchanged
- Push-Carry-Catch-Throw' Tip Attack Interpretation
 - Rule 9.2.2 The ball must not be caught and/or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.
 - To better understand the text of Rule 9.2.2:
 - A thrown ball involves two playing actions, first catching and then throwing the ball.
 - Playing the ball means that the ball rebounds from the contact point.
 - The referee must pay attention to the steadiness of the touch, particularly when a feint attack ("tip") is used, changing the direction in the placing of the ball. During an attack hit, 'tipping' is permitted if the ball is not caught or thrown. 'Tipping' means an attack of the ball (completely above the height of the net) executed, gently, with the fingers of one hand, where the direction of the ball is changed only once during the action and the time in contact with the ball is short in time and in distance. The first referee must watch closely. If the ball after this 'tip' does not instantly rebound, but is accompanied by the hand, is thrown from the palm of the hand, or its direction is changed more than once, it is a fault and must be penalized.
 - Summary
 - NO Push / NO Carry / NO Catch / NO Throw
 - The tip must be executed with ONE HAND
 - The tip must be executed with a SHORT CONTACT
 - The tip must be executed in a STRAIGHT LINE
- Two (2) Handed Attacks
 - For any two-handed action sending the ball over the net, which is NOT a blocking action:
 - A deliberate two-handed attack hit, and
 - A two-handed overhead pass (setting action) that sends the ball over the net.
 - The first action is a FAULT. The second action is a legal playing action, and only results in a fault based on the quality of the contact.
 - With respect to Blocking Actions:
 - Any ball coming from the opponent's side, including a ball rebounding off the opponent's block, may be legally blocked.
 - Any ball coming from a team's own side, including a ball rebounding off its own block, is considered an attack hit when directed towards the opponent's court.
 - The referee's attention should be drawn to the fact that a player's blocking action will not be legal if he/she does not simply intercept the ball coming from the opponent, but holds it (or pushes, carries, throws, accompanies it). In such cases the referee must whistle this fault as a catch.

