

Volleyball Rule Interpretations

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Illinois



SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

- A-1.** In cases not specifically covered by these interpretations, Illinois High School Association (IHSA) rules will govern. Rulebooks can be obtained at <http://www.ihsa.org>
- A-2.** The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions.
- A-3.** At all times athletes and Unified partners are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate/honest scores of their player's ability.
- A-4.** No players may be added to or replaced on the roster after the Team Rating Form (TRF) is submitted.
- A-5.** The following process will be used for all Special Olympics Illinois round robin tournaments:
- The team with the best record at the end of competition will receive first place.
 - If all teams have the same record (one win-one loss), places of finish will be determined by the point differential in the games played.
 - If the point differential is the same, places of finish will be determined by the total points scored by each team during the tournament (highest scoring team receives first place).
 - If still tied after all above options then place of finish is a tie.
- A-6.** In tournament play, the game will be forfeited if a team fails to report on the court, ready to play within ten minutes of the scheduled game time.
- A-7.** The score for a forfeited game shall be 25-0 if the game has not started. If the game is in progress, the offending team shall be awarded its points, and the opponent awarded at least 25 points or a sufficient number to reflect a two-point advantage.
- A-8.** The Libero player will not be used in Special Olympics Illinois competitions.
- A-9.** The tournament director makes the decision to switch benches or remain on the same side through the match. The decision will be communicated to teams prior to the tournament.
- A-10.** Athletes in team competition must qualify from a Region Qualifier to attend Fall Games. Teams must submit an Intent to Play, Team Rating Form and 3 match summary sheets prior to the Region Qualifier. Athletes in Individual Skills must receive a gold medal from a Region Qualifier to advance to Fall Games. See Criteria for Advancement for specific advancement procedures.
- A-11.** Athletes can participate in either team competition or individual skills competition. Athletes can compete in either traditional or Unified team competition – not both.

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A-12. The maximum number of players on a team is 12 and the minimum number of players is 6. Teams must begin a game with 6 players. When a team plays with fewer than six players due to illness, injury or disqualification, a loss of rally/point shall be awarded to the opponent each time a vacant position rotates to serve in the right back position.

A-13. A side out (including awarding of point to opposing team) is assessed if non-registered personnel (coaches, athletes, Unified partners, bus drivers, spectators, etc.) are found to be on the team bench or in the team bench area. A second violation will result in the head coach being ejected from the match.

SECTION B - AGE GROUPS AND DIVISIONS

B-1. All teams will play as coed teams at Special Olympics Illinois competitions. There is no limit on male/female combinations.

B-2. All teams must play at least 3 matches before entering tournament competition (1 match equals best of 2 of 3 games). Two of the three matches must be played against other Special Olympics agencies besides your own. The teams played and scores must be submitted with the proper entry forms. Qualifying matches must be played against similar style of play. Example: Traditional vs Traditional, Modified vs Modified. Teams cannot submit qualifying scores for matches played that are not similar in style Traditional vs Modified.

SECTION C - EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

C-1. The court will be 18.3 meters by 9.1 meters (60 feet by 30 feet). The net will be set at 2.43 meters (7'11") in height.

C-2. The ball will be a rubber bladder covered with leather or canvas. It will measure not less than 25 inches or more than 27 inches in circumference, and will weigh not less than 9 ounces or more than 12 ounces (PSI is between 4.3 and 4.56). A modified volleyball will be allowed in Individual Skills competition.

C-3. No advertising or sponsorship is allowed to be worn on competition uniforms or warm-ups. Athletes will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition. No jeans, jean shorts or street shoes will be allowed to be worn during the competition. Athletes will be expected to dress appropriately for the weather and competition. Athletes not in the proper attire will be disqualified.

C-4. All players on the team must wear the same color shirt with readable numbers on the front and back. Players must wear same color shorts or same color sweat pants.

C-5. Knee pads are recommended.

SECTION D - SERVICE

D-1. A coin toss will be used to determine the selection of court and initial serve. The serve alternates for the two games. Should a third game be necessary there is another coin toss.

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- D-2.** For the first team to serve, the right back player is the first to serve for the team. Thereafter, the right front player rotates to the serving area.
 - D-3.** A team continues serving until it commits a fault or the game ends.
 - D-4.** The serving area is anywhere behind the end line and between the sidelines.
 - D-5.** The server's body may be in the air over or beyond the serving area boundary lines, having left the floor from within the serving area.
 - D-6.** Server must wait for referee's instruction before serving to the opponent. Each server has 8 seconds to serve.
 - D-7.** Blocking and/or attacking a served ball while it is above the height of the net is not permitted.
 - D-8.** The service alternates when there is a violation by the serving team and the ball will be awarded to its opponent who will rotate clockwise one position.
 - D-9.** Short service is not allowed in Special Olympics Illinois competition.
 - D-10.** Net serves are allowed. The net serve is a ball that when served, hits the net without touching the net antenna and continues across the net into the opponent's court. The net serve is a playable live ball provided net contact is entirely within the net antennas.

SECTION E - PLAY

- E-1.** A legal hit is the touch of the ball by any part of the player's body.
- E-2.** A player will not play the ball twice in succession unless there is:
 - a. Simultaneous contact by teammates.
 - b. Simultaneous contact by opponents.
 - c. Successive plays by blockers.
- E-3.** Simultaneous contact by one player with 2 or more parts of the body is permitted and considered one play.
- E-4.** Simultaneous contact of the ball by teammates will be permitted and considered as one play and either player involved may participate in the next play.
- E-5.** A team will not play the ball more than 3 times before it crosses the net to enter the opponent's playing area except when there is simultaneous contact by opponents. A block is not a hit.
- E-6.** Each team is allowed 2 time outs per game. Time outs are 1 minute in length, unless both teams are ready to resume play before the 1 minute expires.

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SECTION F - SCORING

- F-1.** The team which has scored 25 points and is at least 2 points ahead is the winner. If the leading team does not have a 2 point advantage, play will continue until one team has a 2 point advantage.
- F-2.** A 3 game match will be won when a team has won 2 games.
- F-3.** Rally scoring will be used in all Special Olympics Illinois levels of play. In rally scoring, a point is awarded on each serve regardless of which team is serving.
- F-4.** Matches will consist of best of 2 of 3 games with scoring as follows:
 - a. Games 1 and 2 with scoring to 25
 - b. Game 3 with scoring to 15
 - c. In all games, play will continue until one team has a 2 point advantage.

SECTION G - SUBSTITUTIONS ("PLAYER FOR PLAYER" METHOD)

- G-1.** The position of the substitute shall be that of the player replaced without changing the serving order as recorded on the score sheet.
- G-2.** A team is allowed a maximum of 18 substitutions per game. Each player is allowed unlimited entries within the team limit. Starting the game does not count as a substitution. An illegal substitution does not count as an entry provided the illegal substitute is removed from the court.
- G-3.** A re-entering player shall assume the original position in the serving order in relation to other team mates.
- G-4.** IHSA substitution procedures will be followed for all situations.

SECTION H – UNIFIED VOLLEYBALL

- H-1.** The Head Coach must attend a Mandatory Unified Training school prior to submitting an Intent to Play Form.
- H-2.** Basic Competition Rules – same as for regulation Volleyball Team Competition with a few exceptions specifically for Unified Competition.
- H-3.** The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and Unified partners. The maximum number of players on a team is 12 and the minimum number of players is 6. The minimum number must always include 3 Special Olympics athletes. Special Olympics Inc. has determined that an athlete cannot also be a Unified Partner.
- H-4.** During competition, the lineup shall never exceed 3 athletes and 3 Unified partners at any time. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
- H-5.** Each team shall have an adult, non-playing coach responsible for the lineup and conduct of the team during competition.

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- H-6.** The serving order and positions on the court, at service, shall be an alternation of athletes and partners.
- H-7.** Once a server has scored three consecutive points, the team shall rotate to the next server.
- H-8.** Traditional teams that play Unified teams will play by the Unified rules.
- H-9.** The Unified Volleyball competition as part of Fall Games is formatted in the following manner. A divisioning round is played on the first day of competition. **All athletes and Unified partners are required to be in attendance and participate in the divisioning round.** The divisioning round will be such that each team will play every other team in the competition in one 25 point game. Observers will be on the courts. Coaches must play these matches as if they were part of the Medal Round so that observers will have an accurate representation of the team. The Medal Round is the term for all matches being played on Sunday.

After the divisioning round, the teams will be divisioned accordingly for the Medal Round. The observers will have input on the divisioning based on their notes. The bracket and schedule for these games will be posted in a timely manner. The Medal Round will be played on the second day of competition.

If during the Medal Round, it is found that teams are not competing in a fair manner, the team will receive 1 warning. If unfair play continues a second time, the team is disqualified and will not continue to play. The disqualified team receives a Participation Ribbon.

The most flagrant example of this would be the Unified Partners dominating game play so as to have an advantage over the other team. It is the coach's responsibility to manage their athletes and Unified partners and coach within the guiding principles of the Unified Sport program. See below for more examples of how meaningful involvement of Unified partners is not achieved which could result in disqualification:

- a. They have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow members.
 - b. They serve predominantly as on-field coaches rather than teammates.
 - c. They control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
 - d. They do not train or practice regularly and only show up on the day of competition.
 - e. They lower their level of ability dramatically so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.
- H-10.** Unified competition at the Region Qualifiers will follow the fair play rule. A team is given 1 warning for unfair play. If unfair play continues a second time, the team is disqualified and does not continue to play. The team is not eligible to advance to Fall Games. The team receives a participation award.



SECTION I – MODIFIED VOLLEYBALL

I-1. Divisioning

All teams must play at least 3 matches before entering tournament competition (1 match equals best of 2 of 3 games). Two of the three matches must be played against other Special Olympics agencies besides your own. The teams played and scores must be submitted with the Modified Team Rating Form. Qualifying matches must be played with similar style of play. Example: Modified vs Modified, not Modified vs Traditional.

I-2. Competition Adaptations

- a. The court is modified to 7.62m (25') wide and 15.24m (50') long.
- b. The net height will be set at 2.24m (7' 4 1/8").
- c. A lighter weight leather modified volleyball must be used. The size of the ball will not be larger than 81cm (32") in circumference and weigh no more than 226 grams (8 ounces).
- d. A three-point serving rule will be used. Once one player has scored three times, there will be an automatic side out.
- e. Antennas will still be placed above the sideline on the net.
- f. A time limit of 20 minutes will be used for each game in a match.
- g. An official's time out allowed for an injury on the court.

I-3. Basic Competition Rules – same as for regulation Volleyball Team Competition.

I-4. One coach for each team will be allowed to leave their bench and be on their team's playing end of the court during play. The coach must stay off the actual playing court unless play has stopped. This is for modified play only.

I-5. The style of modified ball used through the 2023 season has been discontinued. Starting with the 2024 volleyball season, Special Olympics Illinois will use the Champion Brand Volley Lite Training Ball, **Regulation Size, 10228-PS. Balls can be purchased from School Health (formerly Palos Sports) using this link: <https://www.schoolhealth.com/training-balls?store=schoolhealth>**