

Volleyball

Revised 2025

Special Olympics
Iowa



Registration Entries



Entry forms are available online at www.soiova.org

- Competitions tab > click on Participation Forms > Scroll to Volleyball
- Volleyball Skills Assessment should accompany entry form

State Competition Entries

- Entries can be emailed to: registrations@soiova.org
- After your entries have been put into GMS you will be sent a Delegation Report
 - Review the report and return to the State Office with any corrections

Equipment



- All players, coaches, and athletes must wear tennis shoes
- Uniforms should consist of t-shirts with numbers on the front and back and shorts or volleyball uniform sets
- If a team is unable to wear uniforms or does not have t-shirts with numbers on the front and back, please wear shirts and shorts appropriate for athletic competition
- No denim or khaki shorts

Competition & General Guidelines



Competition:

- Teams will be assigned to divisions based on ability within varying levels of play
- Please see the following slides for specific Division information
- Team Composition: Six players and up to six substitutes
- Rally scoring will be used in all divisions, which means that every time the ball is served a point is scored
- In the Developmental Division all competition will be single game matches, with the winners being the first team to 15
- In all other divisions there will be pool play in the morning consisting of singles games with the winner being the first team to 15
 - Winning team must win by two points
 - The morning games will determine the seeding for medal round play in the afternoon

Specific Division Age Requirements

- Junior 8 – 21
- Senior 22+



Divisioning Criteria

Division I

Playing all high school rules including:

- Foot faults
- In the net
- Carries
- Blocking serve

Criteria

- Majority of servers (four out of six starters) could serve 15 straight if not returned. One or two players could serve six to eight straight, possibly one player who couldn't serve six to eight straight
- Majority of players (four out of six starters) can return a serve or a volley routinely. The rest of team can return a serve or a volley occasionally
- Majority of players can set teammates and play on ball set by teammates
- Majority of starters would move for a ball

Divisioning Criteria



DIVISION II

Some leniency in rules:

- Call all foot faults
- Can touch net if doesn't interfere with opponent, but call if during attempt to spike, and call if at least whole foot touches past center line or interferes with opponent
- Call only obvious carries
- Call spiking serve

Criteria

- Half of starters could serve 15 straight if not returned. One or two players could serve six to eight straight if not returned. One or two players have at least half straight if not returned. One or two players could not serve over 50% from back line
- Half of players can return a serve or a volley routinely. One or two players can return a serve or volley occasionally. One or two players might return a serve or volley hit right to them, if in the front row
- Half of starters can set a teammate and play on ball set by teammates
- Half of starters would move for a ball

Divisioning Criteria



Division III

Added leniency in rules:

- Call foot faults if whole foot is over line
- Can touch net if doesn't interfere with opponents - call if more than one foot is touching under net or interferes with opponents
- Call only very obvious carries
- Call spiking a serve

Criteria

- One or two players could serve 15 straight if not returned. One or two players would regularly serve six to eight straight if not returned. One or two players would have 50% of good serves
- One or two players can return a serve or a volley routinely. One or two players can return a serve or volley occasionally. One or two players might return a serve or volley hit right to them if in the front row. One or two players who rarely would return a serve or volley even if hit right to them when in the front row
- One or two players can set a teammate and play on a ball set by teammates
- One or two players would move for a ball

Divisioning Criteria



DIVISION IV

Increased leniency in rules:

- Call foot faults if whole foot is over line, may move service line closer to the net, but no closer than 14'9" but if server is reaching back row they should serve from end line
- Any touching of net or going under net allowed first time if it doesn't interfere with opponents playing ball. Warn athletes, if same athlete repeats, call as in Division III
- Call only catch and throw
- Can block serve
- Five point service rule- if one player serves consecutively to score five times, service will move to opponent. The change of service is considered a side out and one point is earned by the new server

Divisioning Criteria



DIVISION IV

Criteria

- Half of starters could serve five straight serves in, if not returned from either end line or three feet in. One or two starters at least 50% of serves would be good from either line. One or two starters could not serve at least 50% of serves good from line three feet in
- One or two players can return a serve or volley occasionally. One or two might return a serve or volley that is hit right to them, if they were in the front row. One or two players would rarely return a serve or volley even if the ball was hit right to them and they were in the front row
- One or two players that might set a team mate or play on a ball hit by a teammate
- One or two players might move for a ball



Divisioning Criteria

DEVELOPMENTAL DIVISION

- Call foot faults if whole foot is over the line
- May move service line closer to the net, but not closer than 14'9". If services are reaching the back row then they should serve from the end line

Very lenient on rules similar to Division IV

- Play on smaller court, lower net, lighter, larger ball
- Court: Smaller Size 25' X 50'
- Net: Lower height 7'.4 1/8"
- Ball will be a softer rubber (Volleyball Trainer)
- The service line may be moved closer to the net, but no closer than 4.5 meters from the net

Criteria

- Entire team should consist of athletes with lower levels of abilities

Rule Modifications



The SOIA State Volleyball Tournament will be played according to the official Special Olympics Incorporated (SOI) Volleyball rules except for the following modifications:

Points of Emphasis

- Scoring Change
 - Scoring in Divisions I – IV for afternoon medal round play
 - During medal round play the first two games of the three game match will be played to 21. The third game of the match, if necessary, will be played to 15. Winning team must win by two points
 - Seeding round games in all divisions and all developmental division games will be played to 15. Winning teams must win by two points
- Libero Player
 - Teams in Divisions I and II are encouraged to consider using a Libero player. Please check the SOI Volleyball rules on page four for the rules regarding Libero players

Rules



Rights and Duties of Team Personnel and Players

- Spokesman of the team – playing captain and head coach may address referee only to request clarification of ruling, timeout or substitution
- Timeout requests – request to be made by captain or head coach when ball is dead
 - Teams are allowed two 30 second timeouts per game
- Players must remain on the court during timeouts

The Teams

- Compositions of Teams and Substitutions
 - A team shall consist of six players. The complete team, including substitutions, may not exceed twelve players
 - Teams are allowed free substitutions
- Choice of Playing Area or Serve
 - Decided by coin toss. Winner chooses either first serve or playing area for first game
- Interruption of Play
 - Play may be stopped at any time when an injured player, foreign object, or hazard is noticed by the referee. The referee will direct a replay

Rules



Commencement of Play and the Services

- The Service – putting the ball in play by the player in the right back position who hits the ball with the hand or arm
 - Serve must be started within eight seconds of referee signal. The referee will blow the whistle to call for the serve
 - The ball shall be cleanly hit. If the ball falls without being hit by the server, a replay will be allowed only once during a service rotation
 - The server must be within the service area at the time of striking the ball for the serve. Server may not touch back or side lines of the court. (In Division IV and Developmental the service line may be moved closer to the net, but no closer than 14' 9" or 4.5m.)
 - A good serve passes over the net between the antennas. A let serve is good and is played
 - If served prior to referee signal, in Division IV and Developmental, the server will re-serve, for Division I, II, and III the serve will be a side out
- Serving Faults – side outs and change of service will be called for the following:
 - Ball passed under net
 - Ball passes outside of or hits antenna
 - Ball touches player on serving team or any object prior to entering opponent's area
 - The ball lands outside of opponents playing area
 - Blocking or spiking a serve is illegal

Rules



Commencement of Play and the Services

- Duration of Service – player continues to serve until fault is committed by serving team
 - In Divisions IV and Developmental, after five consecutive successful serves, a side out will be called and serving will change to the opponent
- Serving Out of Order – team loses serve and any points won during service. Team must resume correct serving order
- Change of Service – the team receiving the ball for service rotates on position clockwise before serving
- Positions of Players at Service – placement of players must conform to service order
 - All players with the exception of the server must be on the court. Center front and center back players may be no further left or right than the players on their left or right. Back court players may be no nearer the net than their corresponding front court players. After the ball is contacted, players may move from their respective positions
 - Serving order remains the same for the entire game
 - Serving orders may be changed after each game

Rules



Playing the Ball

- Maximum of Three Team Contacts – a maximum of three consecutive team contacts to return the ball to opponents play area is allowed
- Contacted Ball – player who contacts the ball or is contacted (hit) by the ball is counted as one contact
- Contact to Ball with Body – ball may be hit with any part of the body
- Simultaneous Contact with the Body – ball may be contacted by any number of parts of the body as long as contact is simultaneous
- Successive Contact – players may have successive contacts of the ball during a block as long as there is no finger action used to direct the ball. Any other successive hit shall be a double hit and considered a fault
- Held Ball – when ball visibly rests momentarily on hands or arms. Ball must be clearly hit
- Simultaneous Hits by Opponents – if held simultaneously it is a double fault and a replay is called
 - If contacted simultaneously and not held, play will continue
 - After this, the team to whose side the ball falls will have the right to play the ball three times
 - If, after this, the ball falls out of bounds, the team on the opposite side shall be called for hitting the ball out of bounds

Rules



Playing the Ball

- Ball Played by Teammates – when two players of the same team contact the ball simultaneously this is counted as one contact and either player may take the next contact
- Blocking – action close to the net to prevent the ball from coming from opponent's area. A blocked ball is considered to have crossed the net
 - Blocking may be done only by players in the front row
 - Multiple contacts of the ball are permitted during one block attempt
 - Any player participating in the block may make next contact. This next contact is counted as one of the three allowed the team
 - Team blocking the ball is permitted three additional contacts after the block
 - Backline players may not block, but may play the ball in any area on the court
 - Blocking a serve is prohibited

Rules



Playing the Ball

- Blocking ball across the net above the opponents court is legal if:
 - Ball had intentionally been directed into opponent's court (spike)
 - Opponents have completed three hits
 - Ball is directed over the net or falling near the net and no player on attacking team can make a play
- Ball Contacting Top of Net and Block – if ball contacts the top of the net and is blocked and falls in the attacker's area, the attacking team is entitled to three hits
- Backline Attacker – a backline player returning a ball to the opponent's area while inside the attack area, must contact the ball below the top of the net. This does not apply if the backline player jumps from clearly behind the attack line and lands in the attack area. Penalty for infraction is a fault. The attack area is 10 feet from the net

Rules



Play at the Net

- Ball Contacting and Crossing the Net – shall remain in play provided contact is between the net antennas or their assumed extensions
- Player Contact with Net – player contacting the net during play with any part of the body or uniform will be called for a fault. If the ball is hit into the net causing the net to touch the player, no fault is called
- Simultaneous Contact by Opponents – If opponents contact the net simultaneously, the referee will call a double fault and direct a replay
- Contact by Player Outside of Net – accidental contact of supports, referee's stand, etc. shall not be a fault

Rules



“Dead Ball” includes:

- The ball touches the net antennas or does not pass entirely between the net antennas
- The ball lands out of bounds
- The ball contacts the ceiling or an overhead obstruction and is not legally played next by the offending team
- The ball contacts the ceiling or an overhead obstruction after the third hit
- The ball contacts a wall or ceiling obstruction which is over an unplayable area
- The ball becomes motionless in the net or on an overhead obstruction
- The ball touches the floor
- The ball passes completely under the net
- The ball contacts a non-player in a playable area
- A ball (from the direction of the court) or a player breaks the plane of an unplayable area
- A player commits a fault
- An official’s whistle or timer’s audio signal sounds for any reason

Rules



Team and Player Faults

- Double Fault – opposing players commit faults simultaneously. Replay will be directed
- Faults at Approximately the Same Time – first offense shall be penalized. If not able to determine, will be called a double fault and replay directed
- Penalty for Committing Faults – if the serving team commits a fault, side out is declared. If receiving team commits a fault, serving team is awarded a point
- Team and Player Faults include:
 - Ball touches floor
 - Ball is held, thrown, or pushed
 - Team plays ball more than three times consecutively
 - Player touches ball twice consecutively
 - Team is out of position at service
 - Player touches net or antenna

Rules



Team and Player Faults include:

- Player completely crosses center line and contacts opponent's playing area
- Player attacks ball above opponent's playing area
- Backline player attacks hit ball into opponents playing area from above the net while in attack area
- Ball does not cross net entirely between antennas
- Ball lands outside court or touches object outside court
- Ball is played by a player being assisted by a teammate
- Player receives a personal penalty
- Player reaches under the net and touches the ball or opponent while the ball is being played by the opponent
- Game is delayed persistently
- Players disrupting opponents
- Illegal blocking
- Illegal serve or service fault

Scoring and Result of Game



- When a Point is scored – each time the ball is served a team is awarded a point
- Winning Score – rally scoring will be used. In the morning, a game is won when a team scores 15 points and has a two point advantage. In the afternoon, a game is won when a team scores 21 and has a two point advantage
- Pool play – will be used in the morning. One game will be played with each team in your division
- Bracket play – will be used in the afternoon. Two games to 21 and if needed, a third game tie breaker to 11. Single elimination play

Game Procedures



Pregame

- Call captains together for coin toss
- Three minute warm-up period on court
- Team line up at back line of respective courts and take positions upon whistle and signal of referee
- Second referee verifies line up and service order
- Start of Game
 - Prior to serve, players will halt movement
 - Serve is made upon whistle and signal of first referee
- Substitution Procedures
 - Substitutes approach a referee and wait to be recognized for entry into the game
 - Substitutes entering and players leaving will touch hands and wait to be recognized by the second referee
- End of Game and Start of Next Game
 - Players line up at the net and shake hands with opposing team at the conclusion of the game

Quiz



- Click the link to take the quiz: [Volleyball](#)