

2007 Volleyball Major Rules Changes and Clarifications

The following rules-change proposals have been approved by the NCAA Women's Volleyball Rules Committee and by the Playing Rules Oversight Panel.

Major Rules Changes

Center Line. (Rule 1.2.2.2)—Instead of the solid 2-inch line previously required by the rules, the center line may now have any or all of the following characteristics: (a) solid; (b) interrupted (a series of 4" lines with 2" spaces); or (c) "shadowed" (semi-transparent with a ¼" border).

Comment: The center line often is not a solid line when logos are present. This rule change will incorporate language similar to that in the NCAA Basketball Rules book, allowing a less "obtrusive" center line.

Net Pole Location. (Rule 2.3.1)—For facilities constructed after 2008, the net pole (including padding) shall be at least 1 meter from the sideline.

Comment: There is no minimum specification in the rules, only a recommendation. This will provide current guidelines and future requirements for safer net pole placement.

Communication with Officials. (Rule 5.2.4.3)—Only one coach per team may address the referee at a time.

Comment: The head coach or an assistant coach may address the referees during a dead ball; it does not have to be the same coach throughout the game. However, only one coach at a time may address the referees, and then only under the guidelines already in existence.

Improper Request. (Rule 6.2.2.7)—A request for entry of an illegal player (illegal number/uniform, disqualified or expelled player, etc.) results in an improper request (unless acknowledged (whistled) by the referee).

Comment: The current penalty requires a team delay. This is more consistent with the rules regarding other improper substitution requests and is the same as USAV rules.

Timeout Request. (Rule 6.2.2.8)—The result of a request for a third timeout will be an improper request, unless acknowledged (whistled) by the referee.

Comment: The current penalty is a team delay. This is more consistent with rules regarding other improper requests, and is the same as USAV rules.

Improper Request. (Rule 6.2.3.1)—The first improper request in a game should be assessed as an improper request, even if a team delay has already been assessed to that team in that game.

Comment: The previous rule required a team delay red card in this situation, which the rules committee believes to be excessive. This also aligns NCAA rules with USAV rules.

Improper/Illegal Substitution. (Rule 6.2.3.3 and 6.3.2.2)—An improper substitution or timeout request results in a team delay sanction if the request is acknowledged (whistled) by a referee.

Comment: The current rule calls for an improper request to be assessed, even if the referee stops the game because of the request (a team delay was only assessed if a substitute entered the playing area). Since the game has actually been delayed once the referee whistles, a team delay is the more appropriate result. If the request is not whistled by the referee, but is prevented, only an improper request will result.

Uniform Numbers. (Rule 7.1.2.3)—Beginning with the 2009 season, if numbers are worn on the shorts, the number on each player's shorts shall match the number on the jersey.

Comment: This eliminates some confusion for officials and scorekeepers.

Media Timeouts. (Rule 11.1.3.2)—The recommended length of a media timeout is 75 seconds. The maximum length shall be 90 seconds. The extended time is applied uniformly to all timeouts taken in the broadcast match.

Comment: The length of timeouts in televised matches was not addressed in the previous rule. This language will attempt to unify the practices during a televised match.

Substitution Procedure. (Rule 11.2.4.2)—When a team is making multiple substitutions, only one incoming substitute can be in the substitution zone at a time.

Comment: This will make it easier for the scorekeeper to record substitutions. Multiple substitutions are still allowed during a dead ball, but the substitutions must enter the zone one at a time, just as USAV play has required for the last two years.

Interruptions of Play. (Rule 11.3.1)—A team delay penalty will not be assessed if the game is stopped because necessary player equipment is lost on the court.

Comment: There currently is no direction on whether or not a penalty should be assessed when glasses, contacts, hair bands, etc. cause the game to be stopped. In addition, the previous ruling regarding a towel worn by a player that falls to the floor during play will be reversed, as the towel is now considered necessary equipment. If any necessary equipment (including towels) falls to the court during play and creates a safety hazard, play will be stopped and a play-over.

Officials Arrival. (Rule 18.1.2)—New rule language has been added to specify that the officials shall arrive on site 45 minutes before the start of the match and their jurisdiction will begin when they arrive on the court, at least 30 minutes before the start of the match.

Comment: There was no arrival time specified in the rules. The new language will establish the minimum arrival time; a conference may still require an earlier arrival.

Significant Editorial Changes

Secondary Surface. (Rule 1.1.1)—The word “approximately” has been added to the language regarding the ½ inch allowed for a lower secondary surface.

Comment: This is to prevent those officials who are tempted to “split hairs” because a Sport Court setup is slightly more than ½” in height.

Free Zone Area. (Rule 1.1.1)—The free zone area now reflects that it should be free of obstructions other than net supports, which is more accurate.

Comment: Since net supports can sometimes be relatively intrusive structures (barrels, wires, etc.), the committee felt that the rule should reflect the reality of what is allowed.

Designated Coaches. (Rule 5.2.4) The definition of “coach” is clarified to eliminate use of the term “designated coach,” which caused confusion.

Comment: This will simplify and clarify multiple areas of the book. The interpretation will be that, unless an individual is designated as a coach on the first game line-up sheet, they are **not** a coach. Therefore, all rule references after that point can simply refer to the term “coach” rather than “designated coach”.

Officials’ Mechanics

Signals. (Officials’ Mechanics, Signal No. 1)—The signal for a point is an extended arm indicating which team will serve next.

Comment: This is more consistent with the signals used in the USAV rules. However, note that the signal sequence has not changed for NCAA rules – the first signal will be the fault signal, followed by the new point signal.

Signals. (Officials’ Mechanics, Signal No. 2)—The signal for the ball crossing under the net is pointing at the center line area with an extended index finger. *Comment:* This is consistent with the signals used in the USAV rules.