

 **Detecting Overlaps**Released on MyReferee: August 2013 |  Print

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By Corny Galdones

A rule on players' positions at ball contact for serve is that one foot of each front row player must be closer to the centerline than the corresponding back row player, and one foot of each left/right side player must be closer to the respective left/right sideline than the center player of the corresponding row. Otherwise, it's an overlap fault.

Calling an overlap. Instead of applying this criteria literally, go by the spirit and intent of the rule. If corresponding players are lost or have lined up in the wrong relative positions, it's a fault. Call it. If corresponding players are aligned in proper relative positions but their feet are encroaching or a player leaves early before the service contact to create an overlap, discretely warn the coach and/or players so the team can take corrective action. If the same situation recurs after being warned earlier, call it.

If you miss calling an overlap at time of service, it can be called during or at the end of the play. However, the offending players will no longer be in their service alignment for absolute proof. It is better to make a mental note of the overlap and catch it the next time it occurs. Calling an overlap at game point is gutsy, particularly in a close game. Be sure it's irrefutable.

Between plays. A second referee (R2) must attend to many duties between plays besides watching for overlaps on the receiving team, e.g., scan and monitor team benches, administer substitutions or timeout requests, etc. An R2 won't have much time before the serve to quickly recognize overlaps, especially with today's complex "receive" formations with two, maybe three, primary passers. If unsure of the rotation order, the R2 can inconspicuously get the scorekeeper's input.

One helpful hint for the R2. Take a fast glance at the serving team before each serve. Note the order of the front (or back) row players and whether the setter is in the front or back row. That aids tremendously when the serving team becomes the receiving team upon side out. The first referee (R1) should do likewise with the receiving team. The R1 may see a receiving team overlap not detected by the R2 (or vice versa). How this information is conveyed to each other should be covered in the prematch R1-R2 conference.

Detecting an overlap. There are many schemes to detect overlaps at time of service. Each team's hub is its setter. Key on the setter and the teammate directly across from the setter in the rotation. If those two are not aligned directly opposite one another, that's an alert for an ongoing overlap. Most detection schemes build on that major key by including at least two more players: 1) the players adjacent to the setter, 2) the swing (strong-side) hitters, or 3) the middle hitters. Experiment to find a practical scheme that best suits you. Don't fixate on the setter when looking for overlaps. As an R2 examine the primary passers in relation to other teammates for front-to-back overlaps of passers positioning themselves better to receive serve, or side-to-side overlaps of back row non-passers lining up wrong. Also watch an unprepared substitute who comes into the game lost.

Administering an overlap. When an overlap is cited, be sure to identify to the offending team the players at fault and what their correct positions are. Prevent from citing a team for overlap on two consecutive serves. On the other hand, don't prolong your explanation.

Recognizing and calling overlaps is a basic function in officiating volleyball. Make sure you understand its principles and methodologies.

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