FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DE VOLLEYBALL

NEW REFEREEING GUIDELINES and INSTRUCTIONS

2025 Edition

INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines and Instructions are valid for all competitions except those FIVB Senior Competitions done in conjunction with VolleyballWorld which use a different court layout and extended referee team.

The FIVB Rules of the Game and Refereeing Commission (RG&RC) appeals to all referees officiating in Volleyball events to study thoroughly the FIVB Official Volleyball Rules (2025-2028), these Refereeing Guidelines & Instructions, the Casebook, and the materials on the FIVB Website and the FIVB E-learning Platform to make our game livelier and to avoid interruptions. The FIVB and the RG&RC are confident that all its Referees can master and know how to apply the Official Rules of the Game; therefore, it is not necessary to go into details of the rules here. The main goal of this document is to unify, as much as possible, the criteria of refereeing and give interpretation to some rules, and their accurate application in practice.

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In 2025 we still need to encourage smooth refereeing – that is, to intervene as little as possible and to facilitate the progress of the match as an entertainment. Building on the concept of "smooth refereeing" is the need to understand the contribution the referees make to ***preventing*** artificial arguments and delays and interruptions in the match. Referees need to understand the philosophy which underpins the application of rules to create an entertainment package watched and enjoyed by millions of people around the world.

The good referee helps in this context, by remaining in the background. The bad referee hampers this show by wanting to play a leading role in the match, "hunting" for faults.

He/she must reward the players and teams for spectacular and exciting actions in the spirit of the Rules. Moreover, it is essential that the referee maintains an excellent relationship with the players, coaches, etc. and that his/her behavior be exemplary. Competition as entertainment must be the shared vision of all participants. However, conscious negative expressions or incorrect gestures to the opponent or protests against the referee's decision are strictly forbidden and will be sanctioned.

RULES ANALYSIS

Rule 1 – Playing area

1. In the days before a competition, the Refereeing Team must check the dimensions as well as the quality of the boundary lines. When there is in use the Challenge system, the exact dimensions of the court become even more important. This check must be done before calibration of the Challenge cameras. If they notice an irregularity, they must immediately point it out to the organizers (Court Manager) and ensure its rectification. The examination must verify in particular:
    1. Whether the lines are exactly 5 cm wide (no more and no less)
    2. The length of the lines and diagonals (12.73 m/41' 9’ each) on both courts
    3. That the color of the lines contrasts from the colors of the court and the free zone
2. Check that the free zone for FIVB, World and Official events measures exactly 6.5 m at the back of the court up to the advertising barriers (Rule 1.1), as well as exactly 5 m at the sides (up to the score table or advertising panels.) Note that the benches must be positioned a little further from the court than the score table to ensure a complete 5 m Free Zone.
3. Before the match, the 1st referee must check whether the playing surface has any wet patch and any irregularities (bulging and waves on the surface, poorly stuck down banner etc.) on the floor must be fixed.

Rule 2 – The net and posts

1. Due to the elasticity of the net, the 1st referee should check whether it is correctly tightened. By throwing a ball into the net, he/she can see whether it rebounds correctly. The ball must bounce off the correctly taut net. If the net bulges, it cannot be used and must be fixed.

   The vertical plane of the net must be perpendicular to the playing surface and along the axis of the center line.

   The antennae must be placed on the opposite sides of the net at position 4 on each court, above the outer edge of the side lines (diagram 3) to make each court as identical as possible. Before the official warm-up of the match, referees must check whether the antennas and white side bands are fastened correctly to the net.
2. A match shall not be started if the mesh and/or either band of the net is torn (see also Rule 10.3.2).
3. The 2nd referee must measure the height of the net before the toss by means of a measuring rod (if possible metallic) designed for this purpose. On the rod should be marked the heights of 243/245 cm and 224/226 cm for men and women, respectively. The 1st referee remains near the 2nd referee during this verification to supervise and confirm the measurement.
4. During the game (and especially at the beginning of each set), the corresponding line judges (if they are used) must check whether the side bands are exactly perpendicular to the playing surface and over the side lines and whether the antennae are just at the outer edge of each side band. If this is not the case, they should be readjusted immediately.
5. Before the official warm-up of the match and during the game, the referees must check that the posts and the referee’s stand present no danger to the players (e.g. protruding parts of the posts around the winches, microphones, cables fixing the posts, etc.). If such objects are discovered which risk injury, the referees should request that the organizers remove or cover them.
6. Additional equipment: benches for the teams, scorers' table, a stand for the 1st referee, a rod to measure the height of the net, a pressure gauge, a pump, a thermometer, a hygrometer, a stand for 6 match balls, at least 8 absorbent towels (40x40cm or 40x80cm) for the quick moppers and, where full technology is used, two team tablets, three additional tablets for the 1st, 2nd and challenge referee, and headset communications devices: two open mic (1st, 2nd referees) and two or more push-to-talk versions

(Scorer and Challenge). Where team tablets are not in use, two electric buzzers with red/yellow lamps are required (one electric buzzer at the benches near each team coach) to signal requests for regular game interruptions (time outs), and two Libero jackets/bibs. In FIVB, World, and Official competition, also a buzzer should be installed on the scorers' table, or through the e-score system, to signal rotation faults, illegal Libero replacements, requests for substitution, and to announce illegal substitutions.

7. The organizer must also provide two reserve antennae and a spare net under the scorers' table or near the court.

8. An electronic scoreboard is compulsory for FIVB, World and Official competitions, as well as a manual scoreboard on the scorers' table (or Litescore). Note: even if Litescore is used, a manual score board must still be available in case of technical failure.

Rule 3 – Ball

1. A (metallic) ball stand is needed for storing the 6 match balls near the scorers' table (5 balls in play+ 1 reserve ball)

2. The 2nd referee takes possession of all balls to be used in the match before the start of play and checks that all of them have identical characteristics (color, circumference, weight and pressure).

3. Five-Ball System – during the match (normal scheme):

   Six ball retrievers will be used and placed in the free zone as per diagram 10 in the Rules.

   Before the start of the match, the ball retrievers on positions 1, 2, 4 and 5 will each receive a ball from the 2nd referee who will give the fifth ball to the server for the 1st and the deciding set.

   During the match, when the ball is out of play:

   3.1 If the ball is outside the court, it will be recovered by the closest retriever and immediately rolled towards the retriever who has just passed his/her ball to the player who was to serve.

   3.2 The ball is transferred between the ball retrievers by being rolled on the ground (not thrown), whilst the ball is out of play, preferably not in the side where the scorer's table is situated.

   3.3 If the ball is on the court, the player closest to the ball must immediately roll it out of the court, over the nearest boundary line.

   3.4 At the moment the ball is out of play, the ball retriever number 1 or 2, or 4 or 5 must give the ball to the server as soon as possible, so that the service can take place without any delay.

Rule 4 – Teams

1. A team composition may consist of up to 17 persons comprising up to 12 players, among them up to 2 Libero players and up to 5 team technical officials . The 5 officials allowed on the bench are: the coach, a maximum of two assistant coaches,

a medical doctor and one team therapist.

For FIVB, World and Official competitions for Seniors, the only difference is that up to 14 players may be recorded on the score sheet and play in a match.

The team members participating in the official common warm-up session should be primarily on their own side of the playing area. ONLY the five officials and players listed on the score sheet may participate in the entire warm up. Additional coaches may be involved but only if approved in advance by the Control Committee and only until the start of the official net warm up. For safety reasons, it is permitted to stay in the opponent's side of playing area, but close to the net without disturbing the opponent players and only to prevent accidents with stray balls.

2. The coach and the team captain (who each check and sign the team list for the electronic score sheet or score sheet itself, where paper score sheets are used) are responsible for the identity of the players listed on the score sheet.

3. The 1st referee must check the playing uniforms. He/she must report to the Game Technical Delegate about all irregularities in players' and team officials' uniforms and follow the GTD's instructions, avoiding discussions with any team member for such an irregularity. Where possible, the shirts must be inside the shorts and if they aren't, it is necessary, at an appropriate moment, to ask the players in a polite way, to put them inside - especially at the beginning of the match and each set. Form-fitting shirts which cannot fit inside the shorts, are always acceptable.

   The team captain's stripe (8x2cm) shall be fixed under the number on his/her chest in a way allowing it to be clearly seen during the whole game. The referees shall check it before the start of the game.

4. If the two teams appear with uniforms of the same color, the team listed 1st on the official program, shall change the uniforms. The referees must only report to the GTD for his/her final decision.

5. Each team official on the bench may choose, based on individual preference, between:

   5.1 wearing a warm-up jacket or polo shirt or,

5.2 wearing a dress jacket or collared dress shirt

As long as the items are part of the team's uniform apparel previously approved by the FIVB.

6. Before the match in due time, the referees must apply a careful cross-checking in order to control whether the actual players' numbers are according to the team roster which has been recorded in the score sheet. In this way any discrepancies may be discovered which, if discovered later, may disturb the normal flow of the game. This requires (according to the rule text 2025-28) that the players wear playing uniform for the entire protocol and net warm up (Rule 7.2.3).

Rule 5 – Team leaders

1. The 1st referee must identify the game captain and the coach and only those persons will be allowed to intervene during the game. The referees must know throughout the game who the game captains are.
2. During the match, the 2nd referee must check that the reserve players are seated on the bench or are in the warm-up area. Players in the warm-up area during sets cannot use balls, but may use personal warm up devices (e.g. stretch bands).
3. Should the game captain ask for an explanation on the referee's application of the rules, the 1st referee must give it, if necessary not only with repetition of his/her hand signals, but in FIVB working language (English), speaking briefly, using official terminology of the Rules. The game captain has the right only to ask for an explanation on the application or interpretation of the rules made by the referees in the name of his/her team-mates.
4. The coach does not have the right to request anything from the members of the referee team, except the regular game interruptions (time-outs), exceptional substitutions, and challenges, where the system is in use. But, if on the scoreboard, the number of used regular game interruptions and/or the score are not indicated, or are not correct, he/she may inquire with the scorer, when the ball is out of play.
5. As per the rules of the game, the coach has no right to disturb the game or the work of the officials (referees, scorers, line judges), nor to have the right to enter the court. Nevertheless, it is not recommended for the 2nd referee to ignore the coaches when they address respectfully, asking for some explanation about a normal playing action. Whenever it is necessary, a short and clear answer to the coach can prevent further protest and sanctions. This is part of the "smooth refereeing" philosophy for conducting a volleyball game with common sense and in a good atmosphere.

Rule 6 - TO SCORE A POINT, TO WIN A SET AND THE MATCH

If a rally has been interrupted due to an injury, external interference or any other reason, it is considered as an incomplete rally. It **is not allowed to request** any regular game interruption for either team, except if there is a forced substitution for an injured or sanctioned player during the interruption.

Rule 7 – Structure of play

1. The line-up sheet (or electronic line-up) must be checked by the 2nd referee and by the scorer, before the scorer confirms the line-up data on the score sheet. He/she must check if the players' numbers listed on the line-up sheet correspond to the players' numbers listed on the score sheet. If not, the line-up sheet (or electronic line-up) must be corrected and another one requested by the 2nd referee. In the new line-up sheet any modification may be done solely in the position(s), where the number(s) was/ were not correct. The line-up sheet must be kept by the 2nd referee in his/her pocket in order to be able to verify the actual line-up of teams if it is necessary or required, unless the e-score sheet and 2nd referee post tablet is in use.
2. At the end of each set, the 2nd referee immediately asks the coaches for the line-up sheet or electronic line up for the next set, to avoid prolonging the three-minute interval between the sets.

   If a coach systematically delays the resumption of the game by not providing the line-up (sheet) on time, the 1st referee must give this team an appropriate delay sanction. This also applies if the team fails to provide the information electronically via the tablet.

Rule 8 – States of play

1. It is essential to realize the importance of the word "completely" in the sentence of Rule 8.4.1. It means that any compression which allows the ball to make contact with the line AT ANY TIME during the process of contacting the floor makes the ball "IN", but if the ball does not at any time contact the line, it is "OUT".
2. The cables binding the net beyond the 9.50/10.00 m in length do not belong to the net. This also applies to the posts. Thus, if a ball touches an external part of the net, beyond its side bands (or the referee's chair), it has touched a "foreign object" and should be whistled and signaled by both referees as "ball out", and by the line judges by the wave and point signal.

Rule 9 – Playing the ball

1. Interference with the play of the ball by the line judge, 2nd referee or coach in the free zone:
   - If the ball strikes the official or coach, it is "ball out" (Rule 8.4.2). Exception: the coach penetrates into the space above the court and interferes with the referee's judgment of ball in/ out, (see case 4.48).
   - If the player takes assistance from the official or coach for the contact, it is the fault of the player (assisted hit, Rule 9.1.3) and will not result in a "replay".
2. It is emphasized that only the faults that are seen are to be called. The 1st referee must only look at the part of the body that makes contact with the ball. In his/her judgment he/she should neither be influenced by the position of the player's body before and/or after playing the ball nor by the noise of the contact. The FIVB Rules of the Game & Refereeing

Commission insists that referees should permit overhand finger contact or any other contact that is legal, according to the rules.

3. To better understand the text of Rule 9.2.2:

   A thrown ball involves two playing actions, first catching and then throwing the ball, while playing the ball means that the ball rebounds from the contact point.

4. 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 net height) 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 1st referee must watch closely the "tips". 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 **(driven ball)**, it is a fault, and must be penalized.

5. 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 lifts, pushes, carries, throws, accompanies it). In such cases the referee **must punish this block as a 'catch'** (this should not be exaggerated).

6. In four different cases the team has a first hit (which counts as the first of the three touches of a team):

   6.1 The service reception hit

   6.2 The attack reception hit (not only spike, all attacks; see Rule 13.1.1)

   6.3 The hit of the ball coming from opponent's block

   6.4 The hit of the ball coming from the team's own block.

7. In accordance with the spirit of international competitions and to encourage longer rallies and spectacular actions, only the most obvious violations will be whistled. Therefore, when a player is not in a very good position to play the ball, the 1st referee will be less severe in his/ her judgment of ball handling faults. For example:

   7.1 The setter running to play the ball, or forced to make a very quick action or is forced to jump near the net to reach the ball in order to set.

   7.2 The player is forced to run or make very quick actions to play a ball after it has rebounded from the block or from another player.

   7.3 The 1st team contact may be freely made except if the player catches or throws the ball.

   7.4 The player recovers the ball over the entire length of the score table, including any part of the table which is on the opponent's side of the net (Rule 9, 2022-24).

Rule 10 – Ball at the net and
Rule 11 – Player at the net and Interference

1. The rule (10.1.2) gives the right to replay the ball from the opponent team's free zone. During the match, the players and coaches must recognize practically and make the appropriate movement, if in the free zone, to give space to the player who will replay the ball to his/her court. If the ball heads towards the second referee position, the 2nd referee should move in a way to refrain from collision and ensure the player can play with the ball as much as possible. While giving way to the player, the 2nd referee should avoid, if possible, to jump, run and turn his back to the playing action. In addition to that the 2nd referee **will not move to the direction either of the ball or of the player chasing the ball**. As the player plays the ball the 2nd referee must adjust his/her view, so as to see the ball, the player and the direction of the retrieved ball,

particularly in relation to the antenna defining the crossing space.

If the ball crosses the vertical plane of the net, ***within*** the crossing space, to the opponent's free zone and is touched by the player attempting to return this ball back, the referees must whistle the fault at the moment of the contact and show "out".

Note: according to the decision of Congress 2024, the 1st referee should

IMMEDIATELY whistle the ball as “out” if the ball coming from a second or third

hit of the team passes outside the “Crossing Space” to the opponent free zone,

since from that position it is impossible for the ball to pass through the crossing

space. The 2nd referee would make the call if on that side of the court.

2. The action of playing the ball finishes when the player, after a secure landing, is ready to make another action.

   The action of playing the ball is any action of players who are close to the ball and are trying to play it, even if no contact is made with the ball. Attention should be paid to the following situations:

   If a player is in his/her playing position on his/her court and a ball is driven from the opposing side into the net and causes the net to touch the player, no fault is committed by the latter. The player may apply a movement defending his/her body, but has no right **to do an active action towards the ball** in order to change deliberately the path of the rebounding ball. The latter situation should be considered as a faulty net touch.

   Where a player makes physical contact with an opponent while they are legitimately competing for a ball, this should not automatically be considered as a fault. Should such accidental contact force an opponent to make a net touch fault, this should not be regarded as a fault of either player. However, should this contact is judged by the referee as a consequence of a deliberate attempt to make an opponent commit a fault, and/or confuse or distract the referees, the rally should be stopped and a point awarded to the non-offending team. Then a misconduct sanction should be applied to the player for his / her action in accordance with the sanction scale. Hence, if judged to be deliberate, the baseline for this sanction should be PENALTY (or heavier if the player has had an earlier penalty applied.)

   Contact with the net by a player’s hair: This must only be considered a fault if it is clear that it affected the opponent’s ability to play the ball or it interrupted the rally (e.g. a pony-tail gets tangled in the net).

3. If a player touches an external part of the net (top band outside the antenna**,** cables, poles, etc.), this can never be considered as a fault, unless it affects the structural integrity of the net itself or the net touch is deliberate.

4. When the penetration into the opponent court beyond the centre line is with the foot, i.e. the foot hits the floor on the opponent’s court, to be legal a part of it should remain in contact with the center line or above it.

5. On account of the top quality of the teams participating, the game near the net is of fundamental importance and, therefore, referees and line judges must be particularly attentive, especially in cases where the ball rubs against the blockers’ hands and afterwards is sent outside the court.

   Additionally, the referees must be attentive to cases of interference. When the net between the antennae is contacted by the player during the action of playing, attempting to play the ball, or faking a play on the ball, then that is a NET FAULT. Where the natural rebound is affected by the deliberate action of an opponent moving towards the net, or where the net is caught and the ball is thrown out of the net (sling shot), then that is interference. A player preventing an opponent from moving to reach the ball legitimately is also guilty of interference. Breaking the ropes through contact/ catching them is also interfering with play.

6. In order to facilitate the collaborative work of the two referees, the division of work shall be as follows: the 1st referee will concentrate primarily on the path of the ball and the 2nd referee will focus on the net faults during the entire length of play at the net.

7. An attack hit initiated at the attacker’s side is often finalized just beyond the net due to the inertia of the action. Referees are advised that ***provided the ball is not caught or thrown***

and the contact is initiated on the attacker’s side, this should not be regarded as a fault.

1. In order to authorize the service, it is not necessary to check that the server is ready – only that when the player to serve is in possession of the ball. In normal flow of the game (no substitution, no sanction, etc.) when the referee notices that the player is delaying to take his/her position in the service zone, even having received the ball from the ball retriever, he/she must whistle for the service **as soon as the player steps into the service zone**, regardless if the player has his/her back turned or has not yet reached his/her serving position. The objective of this regulation is to keep the pace of play and shorten the duration of the matches. Some players use certain "rituals" that cause unnecessary delays in the game. To "correct" these bad habits, it is necessary that **ALL** the referees apply these instructions rigorously from the beginning of the match.
2. Before the 1st referee whistles for service, he/she should check whether a replay is requested by TV and should delay whistling to give the service instruction for a moment, following the instructions received from the Control Committee for the given event.
3. The 1st referee and the corresponding line judges (if used) must pay attention to the position of the server at the moment of the service hit or take-off for a jump service. The server may start his/her service motion outside the service zone but, at least, the foot making the ***final*** contact with the floor must be fully inside the service zone at the moment of the take-off.
4. If the server is not coming normally to the service zone or does not accept the ball from the ball retriever, making an intentional delay, the team can receive a delay sanction. In order to avoid misinterpretation, the 8 seconds counts immediately after the 1st referee whistled for service.
5. The 1st referee should pay attention to **screening** during the execution of the service when a player or group of players of the serving team is waving arms, jumping or moving sideways **or is standing grouped** to prevent their opponent from seeing the server and the flight path of the ball until the ball crosses the vertical plane of the net. So, if the served ball can be seen clearly throughout its path, until it crosses the net to the opponent, it cannot be considered as a screen. Referees must be more zealous in taking care of the teams' ***intentions*** to create a screen and prevent **from the beginning of the game** that the teams abuse the screening rule with the excuse of "tactical strategy." Therefore, according to Congress 2024, when a team is CLEARLY GROUPED with the intention of screening, or players are with hands **above head height** (they may, however, protect their heads for safety reasons but must not raise their hands above the head), the referee can indicate this to the serving team, by blowing his/her whistle, to separate the players, and, if they do not do so, the 1st referee **MUST CALL THE SCREEN IMMEDIATELY** after the service, and not wait until the ball passes over the group. It is necessary that ALL referees apply these instructions from the beginning of the matches, to reverse this trend that affects fair play.
6. The service cannot be authorized with whistle by the 1st referee, if a team has not the correct number of players (e.g. 5 or 7 players) on court. In such case he/she should wait and remind the team, and if necessary, should issue a delay sanction. A similar procedure should be applied, if a Libero rotated into position 4, but he/she is clearly not replaced by the respective player.
7. If a positional fault is committed, after the hand signal for the positional fault, the involved referee must indicate the two players. If the players at fault do not rectify their positions themselves, the referees must rectify the position of the players and then the next rally should be started. If the game captain requests more information on the fault, the 2nd referee should take out from his/her pocket the line-up sheet or check the post tablet and show the game captain via the sheet or via the post tablet the players who committed the positional fault. Using the latter, the opponent team's line-up should be covered by the 2nd referee. Note: The 2024 Congress approved the cancellation of **positional** faults by the serving team, in order

to support their defence of the first attack by the opponent. This cancellation does not apply to the receiving team.

8. A test modifying the MOMENT of the positional fault by the receiving team has been authorized and will be applied during all FIVB Events in 2025. Instead of teams being correctly positioned at the service hit, ***the moment the toss of the ball by the server for service will define the fault.***

9. If the service was not executed by the player according to the team's line-up, i.e. a rotational fault occurred and it was discovered only after the end of the rally which started with the rotational fault, only a single point should be awarded to the receiving team. (Rule 7.7.1.1) The next rally should be started after the 2nd referee checks that the rotational order is correct.

Rule 13 – Attack hit

1. When controlling the back row player and the attack hit of the Libero, it is important to understand that such a fault is committed only if the attack hit has been completed (either the ball completely crossed the vertical plane of the net, or was touched by one of the opponents).

Rule 14 – Block

1. The blocker has the right to block any ball within the opponent's space; with his/her hands beyond the net provided that:
   - This ball, after the 1st or 2nd contact by the opposing team, is directed towards the blocker's court and
   - No player of the opponent team is close enough to the net in that part of the playing space to continue his/her action.

   However, if a player of the opposing team is near the ball, which is completely on his side of the net, and about to play it, the block touch beyond the net is a fault if the blocker contacts the ball before the player's action, thus having prevented the opponent's action.

   After the third touch by the opponent, any ball may be blocked within the opponent's space. Here it is important to emphasize that a block is permitted but NOT AN ATTACK (see point 4. below), since an attack over the opponent space is forbidden..
2. Sets and allowable passes (*not* attacks) which do not cross the net towards the opponent's court may not be blocked beyond the net except after the third contact.
3. If one of the blockers puts his/her hands beyond the net and hits the ball (spike) instead of making a blocking action, it is a fault (the expression 'beyond the net' means reaching the hands over the net into the opponent's space). The spike action is characterized by a **back swing,** whereas the block does not.
4. Since the ball may touch any part of the body, if during the block the ball touches the feet during the same action it is not a fault and it is still a block!

Rule 15 – Regular game interruptions (Time Outs and Substitutions)

It is not permitted to request any other regular game interruption if one has already been rejected and sanctioned with a warning for delay before the end of the next completed rally (See points 7 and 8 below, and Rule text 15.2)):

1. TO
   - 1.1 When the coach requests a Time - Out, he/she must ***always*** use the official hand signal. If he/she only stands up, asks orally or presses the buzzer**, or requests via the tablet,** the referee must be sure that he/she is willing to request a time-out, being pro-active, before granting/rejecting anything. If for any reason the request of the Time-Out is rejected, the 1st referee should decide if this is an intention to delay the game and sanction it according to the rules.
   - 1.2 The e-score software and tablet will automatically sound the horn if the team uses the Electronic Team Tablet (ETT) to make the Time out Request.
   - 1.3 The timing of the e-score may be adjusted to reduce the duration of the time out, according to the needs of the competition.
   - 1.4 Should the team(s) wish to re-enter the court before the end of the official time, the referees should permit this, but play should not re-start until the time officially runs out.
2. Substitution
   - 2.1 The 2nd referee will stand between the net post and the scorers' table and – unless the substitution is shown by the scorer to be illegal – make a signal (crossing of the arms) for the players, to exchange across the sideline. (If tablet substitution is used, there is no need to make the crossing signal unless the players are slow in exchanging at the side-line.)

When a manual scoresheet is in use, in case of multiple substitutions, the 2nd referee will wait for the scorer's hand signal, that the previous substitution is registered and then he/she will proceed with the subsequent substitution. Should both teams request substitution during the same interruption, the scorer must sound the horn for each team – the second horn after the first team's procedure is completed) so that no substitution is missed.

In the case of tablet-driven substitution, the software prevents illegal substitutions and is registered on the score sheet automatically, so the 2nd referee only intervenes in extreme cases where delay is caused. The scorer's function, in this case, changes from inputting data to checking data, and then accepting (or rejecting) that data on the electronic device in use. Additionally, if the scorer has to make a manual substitution via the e-score computer, the 2nd referee should make allowance for that and if necessary take a little longer over the process.

It should be noted that the request for substitution is always **the moment of entry of the player into the substitution zone**, regardless of the method employed or which scoring method is in use.

2.2 When a manual scoresheet is in use, multiple substitutions may only be done in succession: first, one pair of players – one player coming off the court and the substitute going in, then another, etc., in order to allow the scorer to take due note and check them one by one. In case of multiple substitution, the substitute players should approach the substitution zone as one unit. If they are not a real couple, but there is a little time after the entrance of first player to the substitution zone when the second player arrives, and it is obvious he/she is part of the substitution, the referees may be less severe, allowing the substitution. The slight delay by the second (third) player cannot cause any real delay to the game, i.e. the next player must be in the substitution zone, when the previous substitution's recording is done.

Again, with the use of the Tablet software, when used, multiple substitutions can be allowed at the same time, so speeding up the game. 2nd Referees are therefore to permit substitutions freely using this method.

2.3 It is very important to ensure that the players move quickly and calmly.

According to the actual method, the case of delay sanctions when substitutes are not ready to enter the match, should be minimized.

It is the 2nd referee's and the scorer's responsibility, not to use the whistle or the buzzer if the substitute player is not ready as requested, or if he/ she enters the substitution zone by mistake. If no delay was caused, the "request" for substitution should be rejected by the 2nd referee without any sanction. The 2nd referee should be pro-active and observant in any case and take steps to prevent such mistakes before the player enters the substitution zone. Should the player not be ready for a substitution (missing/wrong substitution number paddle in the hand, if in use, player in training suits, approaching late to the substitution area etc.) the second referee simply must stop the players involved from entering the substitution area. In case a player enters the substitution area incorrectly, realizes his/her mistake and returns immediately, this request should not be considered as a request to be sanctioned by the referees. In conclusion, the referees should not impose any delay sanction as long as the above-mentioned minor mistakes of the team do not disrupt the flow of the match. This is part of the concept of smooth refereeing.

3. In case of an injury, the referees should stop the game **ONLY** when the player is injured by an obvious trauma (or blood spillage) and there is a clear danger of further injury to the player himself/herself, teammates, or opponents. When a player is **seriously** injured for the reasons stated above and must leave the court, primarily a normal substitution should be made. If it is not possible, then an exceptional substitution due to injury can be made, freely, by the team, leaving out of consideration the "limitations of substitutions", using any player **not on court at the moment of the injury, except the Libero or replacement player.**

The referees must distinguish clearly between illegal substitutions (when a team made an

illegal substitution, then the play is resumed, and the scorer/2nd referee did not notice it, Rule 15.9), and a ***request*** for an illegal substitution which, at the time of the request, the scorer or the 2nd referee realizes is illegal (Rule 16.1.3) and which is to be rejected and punished with a delay sanction.

4. A request for substitution before the start of a set is permitted and should be recorded. The coach should make the substitution request, in this case, with the official hand signal.

5. The referees must study carefully and understand exactly the rule concerning "improper request" (Rule 15.11):
   - what "improper request" means;
   - what are the typical cases;
   - what is the procedure to be followed in such cases;
   - what must be done, if a team makes a second and subsequent improper request in the same match.

   The 2nd referee must ensure that any improper request is recorded in the special section in the score sheet.

6. The assistant scorer registers the Libero's replacements – and also re-designation – on a separate sheet specially prepared for this purpose (R-6), so that the number of the player replaced by the Libero, at any time, is known. (Where the electronic score sheet is in use, the scorer and assistant scorer must cooperate verbally with the recognition and recording of the Libero replacements).

7. Before the end of the next completed rally, it is not allowed to request any type of additional regular game interruption after having already had a request rejected and sanctioned by a delay warning within the same time between one completed rally and the start of the next rally. For example, a team requested a Time-out after the whistle for service, but the game has been stopped and a delay warning was issued. The teams now have no right to request either another Time-out, or a normal player substitution (except an exceptional substitution due to an injury, or a forced substitution for an injured or sanctioned player) before the match is restarted.

8. In the case of an interrupted rally, it is not allowed to request any regular game interruption, except a forced substitution for an injured or sanctioned player, before the end of the next completed rally (Rule 15.2).

9. Injured, ill, expelled or disqualified players must in the first instance be replaced by a legal substitution. Should that not be possible, the team has the right to make an EXCEPTIONAL substitution, using any player **not on court at the moment of the sanction (except the Libero or the regular replacement player).**

Rule 16 – Game delays and Improper Requests

1. The referee must be perfectly familiar with the difference between an improper request and a delay.
   Some examples, among others, which should be considered as an **improper request** in the case of a first occurrence by a team in a match:
   - to request a time-out after the 1st referee already whistled for the next service or during the rally
   - to request the seventh substitution for the first time or the third time-out
   - to request a second substitution before the end of the next completed rally (except for a forced substitution for an ill/injured/sanctioned player)

   If the game has actually been delayed due to an improper request, it should be considered and recorded as a delay. In this case, the team still has the "right" to commit another improper request.

Some examples among others, which should be considered directly as **delay**:
- to repeat any kind of improper request, regardless the type of the first one

- to request an illegal substitution and this error is discovered before the next service
- to repeat a late (after the whistle for service, but before the service hit) Libero replacement
- to fail to replace the Libero who rotates to position 4, and this situation creates a delay to the game

2. The referees should prevent all unintentional or intentional delays by the teams.

While it is acceptable for players to identify to the mopper on court exactly where there is a wet patch, it is the 1st referee's responsibility to decide upon the mopping requests by the players, if they are obviously delaying the game, and, if necessary, to issue delay sanction for these actions. In order to prevent unnecessary delays of continuation of the game, while issuing a delay sanction to a team, the first referee **should not call the game captain** to the referee`s stand to issue the card.
The number and system of operation of the quick moppers may be modified from event to event according to directions received from the Control Committee.

3. Floor mopping

The main purpose of the current procedure is to secure the players' safety and the normal flow of the game and to avoid players having to wipe the floor themselves.

3.1 Floor quick moppers and moppers' equipment

3.1.1 Floor quick moppers

Two quick moppers per court (4 quick moppers in total). QM must be well trained for this task; it is helpful if they are volleyball players.

3.1.2 Moppers' equipment

Eight or more absorbent towels (minimum size 40cm x 40cm, maximum size 40cm x 80cm); 4 (2-2) must be available and located near the technical table, and 4 (2-2) by the moppers sitting on small chairs.

3.1.3 Location of QM

3.1.3.1 Two quick moppers per playing court (4 in total) at each side of the technical table, sitting on small chairs (ready to run to the wet spot).

3.1.3.2 Moppers must pay attention to the fact that they should not obstruct any advertising panel surrounding the playing area regardless of their location, especially behind the 1st referee's chair.

3.2 How to mop the playing court

To ensure the game continuity and stop delaying tactics, the FIVB has made the following decisions:

3.2.1 During "ball out of play" (between rallies) in the game, if necessary:

3.2.1.1 Whenever a quick mopper perceives a wet spot on the court, he/she waits for the end of the rally. Immediately after the referee blows his/her whistle "ball out of play", the mopper(s) must rush out to the wet spot.

3.2.1.2 Immediately after the quick wiping, the mopper(s) must return to their respective position, by taking the shortest way to run off the playing court.

3.2.1.3 In order to match with the serve clock, the amount of time for wiping a wet spot should be no more than 7 seconds between the moment the rally ends with the referee's whistle and the 1st referee's whistle for the next service. No delay of the game must be caused by the moppers.

3.2.1.4 The referees are not involved in the moppers' operations. However, they have the authority to regulate the moppers' operation, only in case where

the game is disturbed by the mopper(s), or if they do not do their work properly.

3.2.1.5 In case of a dangerous wet spot especially on the court, the players and coaches have the right to request the moppers to wipe it. However, to call the moppers onto the court or to the free zone without a reason should be considered as an intentional delay and be sanctioned.

Should a team impede the resumption of the game following a time-out under the pretext of excessive wetness on the floor in front of their team bench, the 1st referee may issue a delay sanction.

Quick mopper towels should not be used to remove such wet patches as the liquid may contain isotonic salts or sugars which would be transferred to the court surface.

3.3 Players' responsibilities

If players, at their own risk, mop the floor with their own small towel, the 1st referee will not wait until mopping is over and players are in their playing positions. Should they not be in their correct place at the moment of the service hit, the corresponding referee will whistle the positional fault.

Rule 18 – Intervals and changes of courts

1. During intervals, balls *other than the game balls*, may be used by players for warming-up in the free zone.

2. During the intervals all game balls remain with the ball retrievers. They do not have the right to give them to the players for warming-up. Before the deciding set, it is the 2nd referee who gives the ball to the first server of the set. During the time-outs and substitutions and during the change of court in the deciding set at the 8th point, the 2nd referee does not take the ball. It remains with the ball retrievers.

Rule 19 – The Libero player

1. In the case where a team has two Liberos, one hour before the match, or according the specific regulations for the competition, if different, the acting Libero should be recorded in the 1st of the two special lines reserved for Liberos.
2. The two Liberos can wear a uniform of different color and design from each other and from the rest of the team (Rule 19.2)
3. The Libero may act as team or game captain (Rule 19.4.2.5). or alternatively as coach.
4. An illegal Libero replacement should be considered in the same way as an illegal substitution.
5. If the Libero is declared unable to play (injured, ill, expelled, etc.), the coach can re-designate as a new Libero, one of the players (replacement player excepted) not on the court *at the moment of the re-designation*.

   The process will be similar to the process of replacement, if the re-designation is done immediately after the injury, or, similar to the procedure of substitution, if the re-designation is done later on. This should be done with little formality as the coach/game captain is effectively confirming the decision he/she made by communicating it to the referee team.
6. Pay attention to the difference between the exceptional substitution of an injured player and the re-designation of an injured Libero.

When a regular player is injured, and there is no possibility of a legal substitution, any player who is not on the court at the moment of the injury (except the Libero and his/her replacement player) *can substitute* for the injured player.

Compare this treatment to the re-designation of a new Libero when *any player who is not on the court at the moment of the re-designation* (except the acting Libero's replacement player or an original acting Libero who had earlier been declared unable to play) *can become the new Libero!* Be aware of the fact, that the re-designation of a new Libero is an option, which the coach can use or not.

Expelled or Disqualified players must be replaced by a legal substitute – however, should none be available, in order not to end the set, the coach has the option (not the obligation) to choose to employ an exceptional substitution as the replacement for the expelled or disqualified player. Any player replaced by an exceptional substitution may not play for the rest of the match. This applies also to an expelled player, if this option is employed. But it is a coach's decision whether to employ this procedure or not. (See Rule 15.8)

7. In order to understand properly the meaning of Rule 19.3.2., the referees have to pay attention to the difference between the wording of Rule 25.2.2.2, which specifies that the scorer has to indicate any error in serving order immediately after the service hit, and Rule 26.2.2.2 which says that the assistant scorer has to notify the referees of any fault of the Libero replacement, without mentioning "after the service hit". That means, immediately when that happens, and Rule 7.7.2 should be implemented only in the case that the Assistant Scorer has missed the notification and a rally (or more) was played.
8. The referees should be able to tell the difference if a team has only one available Libero and he/she becomes unable to play (injured, ill, expelled or disqualified) and if he/she is **declared** unable to play. In the first case it is independent from the team, that the Libero cannot continue the game, meanwhile in the second case this is the team's (coach's or in his/ her absence, the game captain/ assistant coach) decision that the Libero will not continue the game. If the Libero **becomes** unable to play and in the game interruption a new Libero will be re-designated without any delay, he/she may replace the original Libero immediately and directly on the court. However, if the Libero on court is declared unable to play, first the player replaced by the Libero must re-enter the court, then after 1 completed rally the new re-designated Libero has the right to replace any back row player.

Rule 20 – Requirements of conduct
Rule 21 – Misconduct and its sanctions

1. It is important to remember, that according to rule 21.2.1, the behavior of the participants should be respectful and courteous, also toward the Control Committee members, their team-mates and spectators. If the coach's (or any other team official's) attitude exceeds the disciplinary limitations laid down in Rule 21, the 1st referee has to apply the appropriate sanctions without any hesitation. A volleyball match is a sportive show of players, but not a show for the team officials. Referees should not ignore this distinction.

   It is the very strong instruction from the FIVB Rules of the Game and Refereeing Commission that where the coach indulges in excessive play acting or demonstration, or where the coach (or any other team member) addresses the Technical Delegate or other official in any appeal loudly or in an aggressive or derogatory manner, or insult, then the 1st Referee must make a **STRICT APPLICATION** of the sanctions scale.

2. Rule 21.1 deals with "minor misconducts" which are not subject to sanctions. It is the 1st referee's duty to prevent the teams from approaching the sanctioning level. It is crucial that the referees apply their personality to keep under control the "minor misconducts", in order to avoid sanctions later in the game.
3. Practical implementation towards team members for misconduct leading to sanctions, as decided by the 1st referee:

3.1 Team member on the court:

The 1st referee must blow the whistle (usually when the ball is out of play, but as soon as possible when misconduct is serious). He/she then instructs the sanctioned player to approach the referee's stand. When the player is close to the referee's stand, the 1st referee shows the appropriate card(s) telling him/ her in English the reason why he/she is sanctioned.

The 2nd referee acknowledges this action and immediately instructs the scorer to record the appropriate sanction on the score sheet.

If the scorer, based on information on the score sheet, states that the 1st referee's decision is against the scale of sanctions, he/she must immediately inform the 2nd referee of this. The 2nd referee, in turn, after first verifying the scorer's advice, informs the 1st referee of this. The 1st referee must then correct his/her previous decision. .
Team member not on the court:

The 1st referee must blow the whistle, direct the game captain to his/her chair and tells the captain in English who is the player or team member sanctioned and the reason why he/she is sanctioned. The game captain must inform the concerned team member who must acknowledge the sanction. It is the responsibility of the 1st referee, when displaying the appropriate card/s, to make clear who is the sanctioned team member.

3.2 In such a situation the referees and the scorer must collaborate effectively in order to record the correct data (team-member and level of sanction) in the score sheet.

3.3 Implementation of sanctions between sets:

In case of a penalty, the 1st referee should show the card (symbol red card) at the start of the next set.

In case of an expulsion or disqualification, the 1st referee should call the game captain immediately to inform the coach concerned about the type of sanction (to prevent double penalization of the team) which should be followed formally by the cards (red and yellow cards jointly for expulsion and separately for disqualification) at the beginning of the next set.

3.4 Expelled or disqualified players must immediately leave the Field of Play area and go to the team changing room for the duration of the sanction.

4. During the game, the referees must pay attention to the disciplinary aspect, acting with firmness when applying the sanctions for misconduct of players or other team-members, but should be reminded that their function consists of evaluating playing actions, and not of chasing after small individual faults.

Rule 22 – Referee Team and procedures

1. To inform the teams exactly of the nature of the fault whistled by the referees (for the public, TV viewers, etc.), the referees *must* use the official hand signals. Only these hand signals and no others; national or private hand signals can be used only in extreme cases for clarifying a confused situation or playing action.
2. Due to the increased speed of the game, problems may arise showing refereeing errors. To prevent this, the referee team must collaborate very closely; after each playing action they should glance at one another to confirm their decision.

Rule 23 – 1st referee

1. The 1st referee must always cooperate with his/her fellow officials (2nd referee, scorer, line judges). He/she must let them work within their competence and their authority. He/she should perform his/her active duties while standing.

   For example: after whistling for the end of a rally, he/she should immediately look at the other officials (and only then give his/her final decision with the official hand signals):

   - When deciding whether a ball was in or out, he/she should always look at the line judge in charge of the line close to the place where the ball landed (although the 1st referee is not the line judge, naturally he/she has the right, if necessary, to supervise and even overrule his/her colleagues).
   - During the match, the 1st referee must often look at the 2nd referee who is facing him/her (if possible after each rally and also before each whistle for service execution), in order to find out whether he/she is signaling a fault or not (e.g. four contacts, double and/ or to see any last moment request for regular game interruption)
2. The question whether the ball "out" was touched previously by the receiving team (e.g. by the blocker of the receiving team, etc.), is checked by the 1st referee and the line judges. It is, however, the 1st referee who makes the final decision with his/her hand signal, after seeing the signals of the line judge and 2nd referee (in case of slight block touch close to the 2nd referee) or other members of his/her Referee Team.
3. He/she should always make sure that the 2nd referee and the scorer have sufficient time to do their administrative and registration work; for example, if the scorer has had enough time to check the legality of a request for substitution and its registration. If the 1st referee fails to give his/her fellow officials sufficient time to do their work, the scorer and 2nd referee will not be able to follow the next phase of the match, causing potential mistakes by the members of the Referee Team. If the 1st referee fails to give the necessary time for the control and administration of the facts, the 2nd referee must stop the continuation of the match by whistling.
4. The 1st referee may change any decision of his/her fellow officials or of his/her own. If he/she has made a decision (whistled) and then sees that his/her colleagues (2nd referee, line judges or scorer) have, for instance, made a different decision:
   - if he/she is sure that he/she is right, he/she may stick to his/her decision;
   - if he/she sees that he/she was wrong, he/she may change his/her decision;
   - if he/she states that faults were committed simultaneously by both teams (players), he/she should signal for the rally to be replayed;
   - if he/she considers that the 2nd referee's decision, for example, was wrong, he/she can reverse it. For example, if the 2nd referee has called a positional fault by the receiving team, but the 1st referee immediately or after the protest of the game captain has stated the position was correct, he/she should not accept the 2nd referee's decision and can order the rally to be replayed.
5. If the 1st referee finds that one of the other officials does not know his/her job, or is not acting objectively, he/she must have him/her substituted.
6. Only the 1st referee may apply misconduct and "delay" sanctions – the 2nd referee, the scorer and the line judges do not have this right. If officials, other than the 1st referee, notice any irregularity, they should signal and go to the 1st referee to inform him/her of the facts. It is the

1st referee and only him/her who applies sanctions.

7. The 1st referee keeps in sight the volley of the ball and its contact with player(s) or equipment and objects. Consequently, he/she at first checks the regularity of the ball touch. At the moment of the attack hit, he/she looks directly at the attacker and the ball and can just see out of the corners of his/her eyes the probable direction of the ball.

Rule 24 – 2nd referee

1. The 2nd referee must be of the same competence as the 1st referee. He/she will replace the 1st referee in case of absence or in case the 1st referee is unable to continue his/her task.
2. During the exchange of play near the net, the 2nd referee must concentrate on controlling the illegal touch of the whole net by standing on the blockers' side, on all illegal penetrations beyond the center line, and on the illegal playing actions on the antenna at his/her side. The second referee should also control back row players' faulty attacks and blocks in addition to Libero players' block attempts. (For whistling of these faults there is no priority either for first or second referees, both referees may decide on them.)
3. The 2nd referee must also carefully check, before and during the match, if the players are in correct position, on the basis of the teams' "line-up sheet". In this work, (if the pole Tablet is not in use) the 2nd referee is assisted by the scorer, who can tell him/her which player must be in position 1 (server). On the basis of this information, by turning the line-up sheet clockwise in his/her hand, the 2nd referee can state exactly the regular rotation order (position) of each team. When verifying positions, he/she should stand in position II on his left or IV on his right respectively.
   If there is some discrepancy between the players' position and that indicated in the line-up sheet, the 2nd Referee should call the game captain or the coach in order to confirm the proper position of the players.
4. (a) This rule was modified in this current edition with the intention of giving players of the team receiving service a greater opportunity to reach their playing position after the serve hit. Consequently, the control parameters were varied with respect to the lateral and central lines. For this reason, the RG&RC **insists** that the application of this rule of the game MUST BE exactly as described in the texts, Rule 7.4; 7.5 – **with exception of the moment of the fault, instead of the service hit it must be the moment of the toss by the server -,** without giving more advantages than those already granted to the players to achieve their position. No "tolerance" is permitted.
   (b) Congress 2024 approved a rule modification for the serving team which cancelled the need to be in position order (except the server) at the service hit. This modification is designed to support the serving team defend the first attack by opponents.
5. When the 2nd referee calls (whistles) a positional fault on the receiving team, immediately afterwards he/she must indicate the positional fault with the official hand signal and point out exactly the players at fault. If the team at fault's players cannot rectify their positions themselves, the 2nd referee will help rectify the position of the players and then the rally should be started.
6. The 2nd referee must pay attention to the fact, that the free zone must always be free from any obstacle which can cause an injury to a team member (drinking bottles, 1st aid kit, etc.).
7. During TOs, the 2nd referee should not stay in a static position. The 2nd referee can adjust the movement pattern to turn:

- To the teams, to make sure they move close to the benches.
- Toward the scorer, to control his/her work.
- To the assistant scorer, to obtain information about the position of the Liberos.

- To the 1st referee, to receive and/or to give information, if necessary.
- To the teams, to observe and control, if necessary, the team's re-entry before the end of the time out, and to determine if the Libero is about to attempt a "hidden replacement".
- To check the teams' line up by counting the quantity of players attentively, whether the six players of each team have returned to the playing court after the Time Out.

8. If, during the match, the 2nd referee observes unsportsmanlike gestures or words between the opponents, on the first occasion when the ball is out of play, he/she can order the players to change his/her behavior by asking them to calm down; if the situation remains the same, he/she must inform the 1st referee, who must immediately warn or sanction the player(s), depending on the gravity of the behavior.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The first fault to occur must be penalized. The fact that the 1st and the 2nd referees have different areas of responsibility makes it very important that each referee whistles the fault immediately. On the whistle of one of the referees, the rally ends, and the other referee must refrain from whistling after that to avoid confusion to the players and spectators.

Reserve Referee

The following activities are under the responsibility of the Reserve Referee:

1. To replace the 2nd referee in case of absence or in case that he/she is unable to continue his/her work or in case the 2nd referee became 1st referee.
2. To control the substitution paddles (if they are in use), before the match and between the sets. Or to check the proper function of the team tablets.
3. To check the operation of the buzzers before and between the sets, if there is problem.
4. To assist the 2nd referee in keeping the free zone free.
5. To control the substitute players in the warm-up area and on the bench.
6. To bring to the 2nd referee the match balls, immediately after the presentation of the starting players.
7. To give the 2nd referee a match ball after he/she has finished checking the players' standing position.
8. To assist the 2nd referee with guiding the work of the moppers and the scorer.

Challenge Referee and New Technology

Technological innovations are appearing very quickly in relation to our modern game. In many FIVB competitions now, the use of Tablets is mandatory, as are e-score sheets, and headsets for wireless communication. The modern referee in Volleyball must be familiar with these. The details of how these are to be used, and in particular how this relates to the Challenge process/ substitution process can be seen in the specific competition playbooks.

The following recommendations are to be applied by the Challenge Referee and during Challenge procedure:

1. All International referees nominated for competitions which use Video Verification Technology must carefully study the Challenge regulations approved for this particular competition and strictly abide by them.
2. The Challenge referee shall wear an official IR uniform while performing his/her functions.

3. During **WIRELESS** communication between referees it is mandatory to use simple volleyball terminology sentences in English to indicate the nature of a requested challenge, e.g. “touch the net”, “touch the antenna”, “service foot-fault”, “attack-line foot-fault”, “touch the block”, “center line penetration” etc. The recommended order of information directed to the Challenge referee to initiate the Challenge procedure: **Who – What – When**. For example: **“Challenge by team Italy – touch of the net – in the middle of a rally”.**

4. If, on the basis of footage available, it is impossible to make any of above-mentioned conclusions, the challenge referee shall inform the first referee about technical impossibility to decide this challenge and, therefore, the previous decision made by the first referee remains valid (remember: not whistling is also a decision.).

5. If a referee interrupted the rally by whistling a fault which subsequently was challenged and proved to be a wrong **CALL**, then a replay shall be carried out due to this referee error. For example: a first referee called “four hits” or “double hit” when a ball was smashed into the upper part of the net and rebounded back, being contacted by the same team, and the first referee didn’t notice any block contact, but later, after a “block” challenge it was clear that a block contact took place, then a replay shall be called by the 1st referee.

   Note: this is different from a whistle for a fault called just before the ball hits the floor, but evidence proves the call was not correct – see below, paragraph 11.

6. The Challenge referee shall not be under influence of advice of the Challenge operator, except advice about the cameras with the best view for evaluation, or time limitation while evaluating a picture on screen. Under no circumstances must the conclusion of the Challenge referee be made by a "guess" or "prediction", or "anticipation" basis. Only if a Challenge referee is visually sure about the situation can he/she announce the decision. Any doubts shall be interpreted in favor of the previous referee decision.

7. If, according to the Challenge regulations in force, any playing moment within the entire duration of a rally can be challenged, the Challenge referee shall clearly indicate to the Challenge operator about the requested moment. If during the few frames studied in the reviewing process another fault, even if it is not specified in the menu of challenges, (and previous to the challenged one) has been found, then this earlier fault has to be announced by the challenge referee as deciding the rally.

8. The Challenge Referee advises the 1st referee of the nature of the fault. However, the 1st referee must take the final decision based on the evidence provided. It is **not** advised, however, that a 1st referee should over-rule the Challenge Referee's evaluation of the foot-faults during a service or back-row player attack-hit unless he/she is absolutely sure that the challenge referee made a mistake.

9. Where a fault was challenged by the coach, but for an event which occurred fractionally after the ball was out of play, this advice must be given to both referees and an appropriate caption shown on the screen.

   In some cases, there might be a very short time difference between a game fault where teams request video-check and the ball being out of play (ball touches the ground, touches an outside object, etc.). Therefore, it is highly recommended that the referees (challenge referee) show both the video footage of the requested fault and the moment the ball is out of play via the split screen and explain the fault in this way to all participants objectively.

10. The current 2025 version of the Challenge Regulations states that: where there is doubt, during the examination of a Challenge request, the Video Challenge team must use all available TV images to ensure that decisions are made fairly. The 1st referee should be the manager of the whole challenge process and where he/she sees mistakes – e.g. wrong images shown, incorrect interpretation, the 1st referee should insist on a further review including different angles and image sources. Overruling a Challenge Referee decision is a last option, but is part of the authority of the 1st referee.

11. It is important that referees use common sense in their decision making. E.g. team A blocks the ball but just before the ball lands on the court, with no chance of team B reaching it, but the 2nd referee calls net fault against team A blocker. The challenge footage proves there was no fault. Common sense should prevail that this is not a case for a replay – team A legitimately won the rally - Challenge Regulations 12 (c).

.Rule 25 – Scorer

1. The scorer's work is very important, particularly during international matches, where the members of the referee team and of the teams, are from different countries. All international referees **must know how to fill in a scoresheet (manual and electronic);** and, if necessary, they must be capable of doing the work of a scorer.

The scorer:

1. Must check - after receiving the line-up (sheets) and before the start of each set - that the numbers on the line-up sheets can also be found on the score sheet team member list (if not, he/she must report to the 2nd referee).

2. Reports to the 2nd referee the 2nd time-out and the 5th and 6th substitutions of each team (who reports, then, to the 1st referee and to the coach). This applies even when bench and post tablets are in use.

3. During the substitution process, unless the scorer indicates the substitution is illegal, the 2nd referee announces, authorizes and records the substitution of players.

4. When the registration process is completed, the scorer makes the hand signal of "OK", or the voice command “scorer ready”, then the scorer must concentrate to check if the player making the service hit follows the rotation order or not.

5. The scorer must look at the substitute player entering into the substitution zone and immediately compare the number on his/her jersey and the number of the paddle in his/her hand (if the paddles are in use) to that on the score sheet line of "starting players" and "substitutes". If it is discovered that the request is illegal, he/she immediately pushes the buzzer and raises one hand, moving it from side to side, and says: "the request of substitution is illegal". In this case, the 2nd referee must immediately go to the scorers' table and check, on the basis of the score sheet data, the illegality of the request. If confirmed, the request must be rejected by the 2nd referee. The 1st referee must sanction the team by whistling and signaling a "delay". The scorer must register on the score sheet, in the 'sanctions' section, the appropriate sanction. The 2nd referee must check the scorer's work following the sanction.

6. In the event that the team requests more than one substitution, the process of substitution must be done one at a time, so that the scorer has time to register each substitution consecutively. The scorer must, however, use the same process for each substitution.

7. If the substitution is legal, the scorer proceeds to register the substitution on the score sheet and then shows the registration is complete by raising both hands. **Remember, this applies to all substitutions.**

8. In the event that tablet driven substitution is used, along with an electronic scoresheet, the paddles are not used. In this case, the scorer must monitor the score sheet computer screen to ensure that the data going into the record is what is actually occurring on the side line - this still means that all processes for the referees are the same, regardless of the technology in use. In case there is a discrepancy between the player entering the substitution zone and the number transmitted via tablet, the real player should be considered, and the scorer must correct and accept the substitution manually. Verbal communication between scorer and referee is encouraged at this point in case the substitution must be made manually due to late data transmission too. As the substitution may also coincide with a Libero replacement, extra care must be taken here. At the end of all substitutions, a two-handed OK is still required before the match re-starts. If a wireless communication is in use on the match, the scorer simply informs the referees via the wireless system, telling them: "OK, scorer ready", and the 2nd referee's "OK" can also be verbal only. If the system does not work properly or due to loud spectator noise it cannot be heard clearly, he/she is still obliged to show the two-handed OK signal.

9. Should register sanctions on the score sheet only on the instruction of the 2nd Referee or, in case of a protest indicated according to the rules, and with the authorization of the 1st referee writes or permits the team captain to write the remark on the score sheet.

10. Must write a remark if a player is injured and removed from the match by regular or exceptional substitution. The remark should indicate the number of the player injured, the set during which the injury occurred, and the score at the time of the injury.

Rule 26 – The assistant scorer

1. The assistant scorer sits close to the scorer. In case the scorer is unable to continue his/her task he/she acts as the substitute for the scorer.
2. His/her responsibilities are:
   - 2.1 To complete the Libero control sheet (R-6) If the e-scoresheet is not in use, and to check whether the Libero's replacements during the match are legal or not.
   - 2.2 If no lite score is in use, to handle the manual scoreboard on the scorers' table.
   - 2.3 To check if the scoreboard shows the right results and if not, to correct it.
   - 2.4 During TO's, to inform the 2nd referee about the position of the Liberos, by using the hand signal of "in" and "out", but only with one hand for each team.
   - 2.5 To forward to the Game Technical Delegate, immediately after the end of each set, the information about the duration of each set and the starting time and end time of the match, in written form.

2.6 Where necessary, to assist the scorer by pressing the buzzer to acknowledge and announce substitution requests.

2.7 To verbally assist the scorer with information during the substitution process.

2.8 To operate the Service clock, where applicable.

Rule 27 – Line judges (only when VCS is not in use)

1. The line judges' work is very important, especially during high level international matches. All international candidates and referees must also be familiar in practice with the line judges' work, in case they are designated as line judges during international matches.

   1.1. Must be present on the playing area, in uniform, 60 minutes before the match start time.

   1.2. Are required to signal

   - balls ″in″ or "out″ close to the line of which are in charge,

   - service faults described in Rule 12.4.3.

   1.3. If the ball touches the antenna, crosses over it, or flies outside it, into the opponent's court, the line judge **facing to the direction of the ball**, must signal the fault,

   1.4. Faults should be signaled clearly, to ensure beyond any doubt that the 1st referee sees them.

2. The line judge should relax between rallies.

3. The line judges should leave their position during TO and stay at the respective corners of the playing area, behind the advertising barriers. If this is not possible during set intervals, they should stand two-by-two against the delimitation fence on the bench side of the Control Area.

Rule 28 – Official hand signals

1. The referees must use only the official hand signals. The use of any other signals should be avoided, but in any case, they should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to be understood by the team members.

   The following, however, gives more detail to the sequences which should and should not be employed during a match.

2. **Decision by the 1st Referee**. The 1st Referee will signal the end of the rally (or fault) by the whistle, indicate side to serve next, indicate the nature of the fault, then the player at fault (if necessary). The 2nd Referee will not take part in any of this signaling, but will, however, simply walk to the side of the team to receive next. Eye contact with the 1st Referee will still be required. Assistance during or at the end of the rally for "touches" (if the "touch" is not clear) or "four hits" is still expected, if wireless communication is not available. These actions can be done before the 2nd Referee moves, so that the 1st Referee is in full possession of the facts.

3. **Decision by the 2nd Referee** (e.g. net fault, illegal back row block, etc). The sequence by the 2nd Referee: whistle, indicate the nature of the fault, indicate (if necessary) the player at fault, pause, then follow the 1st Referee's signal for side to serve next.

4. **Time out Request**: this is normally done by the 2nd Referee (but is still within the remit of the 1st Referee if the 2nd Referee does not hear/ see the request by the coach). The 1st Referee does not need to repeat this.

5. **Replayed rally/ double fault**. While both Referees may whistle this incident and indicate by

signal the replay (e.g. ball rolling on to court, player injured during a rally, etc.), it normally

remains the 1st Referee's task to indicate the side to serve. The 2nd Referee will only copy the 1st Referee's signal for the team to serve next if he/ she actually whistled the stoppage in play.

6. **Both Referees whistle at the same moment to stop play but for different things**. Here each referee will indicate the nature of the fault – but this time because the 1st Referee must decide which course of action to follow after this, ONLY THE 1st REFEREE will indicate the "double fault" signal and indicate team to serve next.

7. **Player serves too early** (before the whistle). This is entirely the job of the 1st Referee to indicate replay and team to serve next.

8. **End of set**. This is done by the 1st Referee. The 2nd Referee may, if the 1st Referee has not noticed the score, politely remind the 1st Referee with this signal, but this should remain exclusively the responsibility of the 1st Referee.

9. When the 2nd referee does whistle for a fault he/she must be careful to show the hand signal on the side where the fault was committed. For example: if a player from the team that is on his/her right has touched the net, and he/she whistles this fault, the hand signals should not be shown through the net from the other team's side, but the referee should move so that the hand signal is indicated on the side of the fault. The signal should not be shown while walking – the 2nd referee should stop, and signal when facing the court.

10. Referees must whistle quickly, with certainty in signaling faults, having taken into consideration the two following points:

    10.1. The referee should not signal a fault, when urged to by the public or players.

    10.2 When fully aware of having made a misjudgment, the referee may or ought to rectify his/her error (or that of other members of the referee team), on condition that this is done immediately.

11. The referees and line judges should pay attention to the correct application and use of the 'out' hand/flag signal:

    11.1. For all balls that land "directly out" after an attack or a block by the opposing team, the hand/flag signal of "ball out" must be used.

    11.2. If a ball from an attack hit crosses the net and touches the floor outside the playing court, but a blocker or other player of the defending team touches it, the officials must show only the hand/flag signal "ball touched".

    11.3 If a ball, after a team has played it with the 1st, 2nd or third hit, is out on its own side (e.g. touches the floor outside the playing court, touches an object outside the court, the ceiling or a person out of play, advertising panel, etc.), the hand signal is "ball touched".

    11.4 If after an attack hit the ball is smashed into the top of the net and after that it lands "out" on the attacker's side without touching the opponent's block, the hand signal is "out", but immediately after it the attacking player must be indicated (so that everybody understands that the ball was not touched by the blockers). If, in the same case, the ball touches the block and afterwards flies out on the attacker's side, the hand signal is "ball out" and the 1st referee should indicate the blocker(s).

    11.5 If the ball is spiked and becomes out on the opponent side, because it hits or is contacted by the coach within the free zone or another person not in play the hand/flag signal is "out"

12. Where an attack hit is completed when the ball is coming from an overhand finger pass (setting action) by the Libero in his/her front zone, the 1st referee must use the hand signal no. 21 (attack hit fault) and point at the Libero.

13. The line judge’s flag signals are also very important from the point of view of the participants and public. The 1st referee must check the line judge’s flag signals if they are not properly done, he/she may correct them.

14. If the ball doesn't pass the vertical plane of the net after the third hit of the team, then:

    14.1 Whether the same player who plays the last ball touches the ball again or another player touches the ball, the fault is FOUR HITS and the hand signal is "four hits".

WORKING PROGRAMME

- Arrival before tournament

  The referees must reach the host city of the competition as indicated in their assignment. They must take their official uniforms with them.

- Workshops

  Theoretical and practical Refereeing Workshops will take place before the start of the competition with the attendance of referees, scorers, line judges, moppers, ball retrievers and court announcers.

- Comments on refereeing

  A short briefing is held after the match in the refereeing room to provide a short feedback where the referees' performance in the previous games will be analyzed. Where possible, referees should self-evaluate where they did well and where they could improve.

  If a general, important topic has been raised, on the next day a formal meeting with the Refereeing Sub-Committee members and all of the referees of the competition might take place.

- Information on assignments

  Assignments to the matches will be notified to the 1st, 2nd, challenge and reserve referees normally:

  - the night before the match.

- Behavior

  The referees responsible for the management of the matches during the competition must show exemplary conduct throughout the competition, from their arrival until their departure from the city/ cities in which the competition is hosted.
  They are to respect strictly the timetable of all the activities, which had been fixed by the Refereeing Sub-Committee, and maintain the image of the referees inside and outside the sports halls.
  The Refereeing Sub-Committee or Referee Coach is duly empowered to suspend from function and even disqualify, depending upon the fault, any member of the referee team whose conduct is not of the standard expected from them.

  FIVB Rules of the Game & Refereeing Commission