



2007-08 NFHS VOLLEYBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS

Publisher's Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.

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Corrections to Rule Book: Page 11, Rule 1-8 should be shaded; page 38, Rule 9-9-1e, delete "or illegal libero replacement" and add to end of phrase "or illegal libero replacement attempts to enter the game"; pages 56 and 57, sample game, delete the listing of the libero in the Player No. column in serve order position IV for James Wood (#7) and III for Handley (#30) as libero is not listed when serving, delete the second listing of #26 in position III for Handley as the second listing is not needed; page 56, add triangle around the loss of rally symbol for serve position IV; page 57, add triangle around loss of rally symbol for serve position III.

Corrections to Preseason Guide: Page 8, "What is a Collective Block," in second paragraph line 16 should be "illegal block"; page 11, "Replacements and Timeouts," Play 1 line 11 should be "illegal alignment" and delete "unnecessary delay."

SITUATION 1: Player No. 12 is wearing a watch during warm-ups. As set forth by the state association policy to always communicate with the coach, the official directs the coach of player No. 12 to have the player remove the watch rather than going directly to the player. **RULING:** Acceptable procedure. **COMMENT:** Rule 4-1-6 and Penalty 1 provides that jewelry shall not be worn during warm-ups and, if discovered, the official shall direct the player to remove the jewelry. Many times a member of the coaching staff is not readily available and because this is an issue of risk minimization, the officials want to have this situation corrected in an immediate fashion and at the same time not delay the player from participating in warm-

ups. Therefore, the rule allows the player to be contacted by the official. However, it is good preventive officiating to have the official always follow-up with the coach to let him/her know of the situation and the player involved. The state association may indeed establish policy to have all communication go through the coach. (4-1-6; 4-1-Penalty 1)

SITUATION 2: Team A is wearing a uniform top that is a medium color blue with a) solid medium gray number, b) solid gray number surrounded by a ½-inch white trim or c) solid gray with a ½ inch shadowed border on part of the number. The referee determines a) and c) are illegal uniforms and b) is legal. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In a), the gray is not in sharp contrast to the uniform top and the number is not clearly visible. In c), a shadow border, which is only on part of the number though it is a sharp contrasting color to the top, does completely surround the number to make the number clearly visible. b) Legal as the trim is ½-inch wide, is in a sharp contrasting color to the body of the uniform top and is wide enough to make the number clearly visible. (4-2-4c)

SITUATION 3: The state association modifies the officials' volleyball uniform to accommodate extreme heat and humid conditions. The modification consists of black shorts, white socks and black shoes. Later in the fall, the officials return to the standard uniform of a white collared, short-sleeve polo shirt, black slacks, black socks and black shoes. **RULING:** Legal, proper procedure. **COMMENT:** Rule 5-2-1 NOTE 3 allows a state association to modify the officials' uni-

form due to extreme heat. This may include the shorts and, if deemed appropriate, the color of socks. The state association should consider keeping the officials in a standard style uniform for consistency at the match and professional appearance by the officiating crew. Each state association is in the best position to make these decisions related to weather conditions. (5-2-1 NOTE)

SITUATION 4: The libero (a) while playing the center back (CB) position is standing closer to the net than the center front (CF) player at the moment of contact of the serve; (b) during the same dead ball exits the court from the left back (LB) position, briefly sits on the bench then re-enters the court in replacement of the center back (CB) player; (c) is not listed on the lineup sheet for the second game. **RULING:** (a) Illegal alignment; (b) illegal libero replacement; (c) failure to list the libero number on the lineup sheet results in no libero for that game. **COMMENT:** (a) At the moment of serve, all players, including the libero, shall be in correct serving order. Each front-row player shall have at least part of one foot touching the floor closer to the center line than both feet of the corresponding back-row player. (6-3-3b) (b) One libero replacement may be exercised per dead ball unless the libero is replacing the player in the right back position and will serve the next rally. (10-4-1c) (c) If the libero is not listed on the lineup sheet, he/she cannot play in that game as the libero. The libero, when used, must be designated on the lineup sheet prior to each game. (6-3-2a)

SITUATION 5: After the whistle/signal to serve, Team A's RB drops the

ball in an attempt to get a re-serve. As soon as the whistle sounds and the official signals re-serve, the libero replaces a back-row player. The official should (a) allow the replacement, (b) whistle and signal unnecessary delay or (c) whistle and signal illegal alignment. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Incorrect procedure; (c) correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The libero may not replace a back-row player during a re-serve. A re-serve is considered a single attempt to serve. The penalty after the whistle/ signal for serve is illegal alignment. (8-1-5; 10-4-1f)

SITUATION 6: Team R's No. 8 replaces the libero. After the contact of the serve, the referee spots a ball from another court on the floor and whistles the ball dead and signals replay. The libero then replaces No. 3. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Even though no points were scored, the ball was served and a rally has taken place. Replacements are allowed. (9-8-1g; 10-4-1)

SITUATION 7: The Team S libero has served in the current game in position No. 3 of the serve order (in replacement of starting player No. 5). Later in the same game, the libero comes from the bench to replace starting player No. 7, who has just rotated to the right back position and prepares to serve. The officials are aware that the libero cannot serve in this second position. The official (a) whistles/signals illegal alignment; (b) whistles/signals for serve, waits for the contact of the serve by the libero and whistles/signals improper server; (c) whistles/signals delay of game. **RULING:** (a) and (c) Incorrect procedures; (b) correct procedure. **COMMENT:** There is nothing improper or illegal about the libero coming from the bench to replace a back row player. The officials should treat this situation as any other potential wrong server—wait until the contact of the serve before assessing illegal alignment/improper server. Once the penalty is assessed, the libero can remain on the court in replacement of No. 7 as a rally has occurred. (8-2-5d, 10-4-1a)

SITUATION 8: The CF on Team A directs a hard-driven spike toward Team B's LB. The attack is too high to take the ball with a forearm pass and too hard to take the ball with finger

action. The player – just to keep the ball in play – uses a beach dig. The official allows play to continue as there was no prolonged contact. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** A beach dig is sometimes called a face dig. The hands are clasped together by thumbs interlocked and hands overlaid. It is sometimes taught with the hands cupped. It is a rebounding action to keep the ball in play. [9-5-1a(4)]

SITUATION 9: Team A earns the rally/point. After the official whistles/signals for serve (a) no replacement enters for the libero and the libero has rotated to the left front (LF) position; (b) the correct replacement player runs onto the court and quickly replaces the libero in the left front (LF) position. **RULING:** Both (a) and (b) are illegal. **COMMENT:** Rule 9-5-6d... "A libero shall not rotate to the front row." Rule 10-4-1f... "A libero replacement must be completed during a dead ball prior to the whistle and signal for serve." In both (a) and (b), the official shall whistle and signal illegal alignment and award the point/rally to Team B. (9-5-6d; 10-4 Penalty)

SITUATION 10: In game No. 2 with the score tied 24-24, the libero from Team S rushes into the service area without going through the proper replacement procedure of entering and leaving the court between the end line and the attack line. The RF of Team S who was to rotate to the RB position leaves the court in front of the attack line and not in the replacement zone. The official waits to see if there is any other player action, then whistles and signals unnecessary delay for an illegal libero replacement. The two players involved in the replacement must go through the proper procedure to have the libero enter legally. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** It is important that the proper replacement procedure is followed. The scorer and assistant scorer need to see which players are involved in the replacement and in this case be aware that the libero is serving and is serving in the correct position in the serve order. The umpire also needs to clearly see the replacement so confusion does not exist due to the RF leaving the court in the substitution zone. (10-4-1e; 10-4 Penalty 1)

SITUATION 11: Player No. 8 for Team S is rotating to the right back to serve. The coach for Team S requests a substitution, No. 10 for No. 8. Player No. 10 serves, and Team S loses the rally. The libero for Team S then replaces player No. 10 and plays the back-row positions. When the libero rotates off the back row, (a) player No. 8 replaces the libero; (b) player No. 10 replaces the libero; (c) player No. 10 replaces the libero, moves to the substitution zone while player No. 8 leaves the bench area, enters the substitution zone and substitutes for player No. 10. **RULING:** (a) Incorrect procedure; (b) and (c) correct procedures. **COMMENT:** The libero must be replaced by the player whom the libero originally replaced. If an incorrect player replaces the libero, delay of game is assessed if the error is discovered by the officials before the next whistle/signal for serve. If the incorrect player is on the court when the whistle/signal for serve occurs, illegal alignment results. (10-4-1b; 10-4 Penalty 1)

SITUATION 12: The Team S libero is on the bench and has not served in this game. Before the referee whistles/signals for serve and while player No. 5 is in the service area, the coach instructs the libero to serve for No. 5. The libero and No. 5 exchange positions at the end of the court. Neither player crosses the sideline between the attack line and the end line. The officials whistle/signal delay of game. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The players involved in a libero replacement must enter and exit the court over the sideline between the attack line and the end line so that the assistant scorer (libero tracker) is able to observe and record all libero replacements accurately and the libero tracking sheet reflects the players actually on the court at all times. In all cases, the illegal libero must enter legally or be replaced by a legal player. (10-4-1e; 10-4-Penalty 1)

SITUATION 13: Team R calls a timeout. At the completion of the time-out as Team R takes the court, the libero replaces No. 3 in the back row. At the contact of serve, the referee blows the whistle and signals illegal alignment with the libero. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The libero replacement may not take place dur-

ing a time-out. The replacement may happen after the time-out when both teams have taken the court. However, the court player must enter the court first and then the replacement may occur. In this situation, it is good preventive officiating to have the libero stand in the replacement zone and after the umpire has made a check that all is correct just simply sweep/invite the libero to enter. In this manner both teams are positioned, the legal players are on the court and the umpire facilitates the assistant scorer and scorer, if the libero is to serve, to be aware of this replacement at the end of the time-out. (Rule 10-4-3)

SITUATION 14: The libero for Team R has not yet served in the current game. The libero has replaced player No. 5 and is playing in the left back position. Team R wins a rally and rotates, moving player No. 8 to the serving position. The libero goes to the service area, player No. 8 exits the court over the sideline between the attack line and the end line, and player No. 5 returns to the court to the left front position. The official (a) whistles/signals for serve; (b) whistles/signals delay of game; (c) whistles/signals illegal alignment. **RULING:** (a) Correct procedure; (b) and (c) incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** These player replacements are all legal, and if they are executed in a timely fashion, there is no delay of game. The libero may serve in one position in the serve order. There does not have to be a rally between libero replacements if the libero serves the next rally. (10-4-1a; 10-4-6a, b)

SITUATION 15: The Team S libero has served in the current game in

position No. 3 in the serve order (in replacement of starting player No. 5). Later in the same game, the libero is on the court in replacement of starting player No. 10. The team wins a rally and rotates to serve. Starting player No. 7 is the next legal server. Player No. 7 leaves the court, player No. 10 returns to the court, and the libero goes to the service area and prepares to serve. The officials are aware that the libero cannot serve in this second position. The officials (a) whistle/signal delay of game and indicate illegal libero replacement; (b) whistle/signal illegal alignment; (c) whistle/signal for serve followed by a whistle signal for illegal alignment/improper server. **RULING:** (b) Incorrect procedure; (a) and (c) correct procedures. **COMMENT:** The libero replacement is illegal since the libero can only avoid sitting out a rally between replacements IF the libero is the next LEGAL server. (10-4-5a) If the officials intervene prior to the beckon for serve, they can assess the delay of game penalty for illegal libero replacement as the libero did not sit out a rally between replacements. Player No. 7 would be the legal server and the libero can either remain in the game for player No. 10 on the back row, or go to the bench. If the officials do not intervene until the libero illegally contacts the serve, they would need to assess the illegal alignment/improper server penalty. Once the loss of rally/point is awarded, the libero can remain on the court in replacement of No. 7 as a rally has occurred. (10-4-5a)

SITUATION 16: Team B receives the ball for the next serve. During this dead ball and prior to the whistle and signal for serve, player No. 7, representing as the libero, replaces player

No. 23. Several rotations later, No. 23 replaces No. 7. One play occurs and then player No. 14, as libero, replaces No. 23 before the whistle and signal for serve. This is the second player to attempt to enter the game as the libero. The referee calls unnecessary delay. Player No. 7 now tries to enter the game after the unnecessary delay is called. The official permits the proper replacement. **RULING:** Correct procedure. (10-4-5c, 10-4 Penalty 1)

SITUATION 17: The libero for Team A has replaced player No. 3 in position No. 1 (RB) and has served two points. Player No. 3 returns to the game to replace the libero and serves the next rally. The libero stays on the court to replace another back-row player. The officials (a) intercede to correct the situation, whistle/signal delay of game; (b) allow the replacement, whistle/signal Team A player No. 3 to serve at which time the illegal replacement is identified and the officials whistle/signal illegal alignment and award the rally/point to Team B. **RULING:** Either a) or b) could be correct. **COMMENT:** The officials' judgment comes into play in this situation as they must determine what is occurring in this game. As is stated in the COMMENTS ON THE RULES, "This distinction in penalties more accurately reflects what is occurring in the game and prevents poor procedure by not having a timely replacement detract from the flow of the game." (10-4 Penalty)