

Diocese of Cleveland CYO

Spring Volleyball

Giving the Very Best of Yourself!

Rules
2026



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CYO inspires young people to know God, to love God, and to serve God through athletics.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules apply in this league with the exceptions contained within. CYO game contest rules may not be altered by mutual consent of the coaches. Only the CYO office may issue authorize changes.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL RULES

A. OFFICIAL TEAM

1. Defined as an individual or group of children from one or more Members listed on the team roster that meet the eligibility rules and are approved by the Member Athletic Director, Member Administrator and CYO Office.
2. A CYO Team refusing to continue playing a scheduled match for any reason without the consent of the official or CYO representative may be subject to penalties as outlined in Bylaw 10. This also applies to CYO Sanctioned Events.
3. Grade School Volleyball is open to grades 1-8
 - a. All genders may participate on a 1st and 2rd grade team.
4. An official team will be a minimum of 6 players on a roster.
 - a. In all divisions, a team may begin a match with 5 players.
 - i. If a 6th player arrives after a set has begun, they will enter the 6th position.
 - b. 8th & 6th Grade Divisions
 - i. When a team plays with fewer than 6 players, then a loss of serve and rally point is awarded to the opponent each time a vacant position rotates to serve in the right back position.
 - ii. The vacant position remains open when rotating to the front row.
 - c. 4th & 2nd Grade Divisions
 - i. When a team plays with fewer than 6 players, it is encouraged that the team play 3 players in the front row and 2 players in the back row.
 - ii. There is no penalty assessed for playing with fewer than 6 players.
5. A partial roster or combined roster cannot be entered into any tournament or sanctioned event.
6. Rosters cannot be split to form 2 teams at any time.

B. OFFICIALS

1. 2nd Grade Division: The Home Team will provide one competent individual, 13 years or older, to serve as an Official.
2. 4th-8th Grade Divisions:
 - a. Officials that are certified and registered with the Diocese of Cleveland CYO will be assigned to each match.
 - b. Officials have the power to warn or disqualify from the competition anyone who commits acts which intend to influence their decisions.
 - c. One official will be assigned to each regular season match. Two or more officials may be assigned for sanctioned events and play-offs.

C. EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

1. Tennis shoes must be worn. For safety reasons, players may not wear their game shoes into the gym.
2. All players must wear knee pads.
3. Hair devices made of soft material and no more than 3 inches wide may be worn in the hair on or the head
4. Hair adornments may be worn provided they are securely fastened and do not present a safety hazard.
5. Chains, other jewelry, glitter, face paint, or other inappropriate items may not be worn during the match.
 - a. Medical alert & religious medals are not considered jewelry and shall be taped to the body and the alert may be visible.
6. Small and secured stud or post jewelry can be worn above the chin.
7. All athletes are required to wear Member issued uniforms.

8. Numbers on the jersey are mandatory. A number shall be printed on the front and back of each jersey. The number on the back of the jersey shall be at least 6 inches in height and centered, while the number on the front of the jersey shall be at least 4 inches in height. The front number shall be placed so the number is centered no more than 5 inches below the neckline opening/ribbing.
9. Uniform tops shall be like-colored and uniform bottoms shall be like colored. Uniforms tops are not required to be the same color as the uniform bottom.
10. Uniform Top:
 - a. Bare midriff tops are prohibited. Uniform top shall be tucked in or hang below the waistband.
 - b. Any visible garment (t-shirt, body suits and other similar garments) worn underneath the uniform top shall be unadorned and of a single, solid color that is similar in color to the predominant color of the uniform top.
11. Like-colored uniform bottom:
 - a. Multiple styles of uniform bottoms may be worn by teammates and may include: shorts, spandex, pants or skirts
 - b. A visible undergarment may be worn under the uniform bottom. It shall be of a single, solid color similar to the predominant color of the uniform bottom and may extend below the uniform bottom.
 - c. Cutoffs or sweatpants under the uniform shorts are not permitted.
12. All athletes must have the CYO Emblem on their uniform sewn or stenciled.
13. Team members may wear black, white or gray undergarments in addition to undergarments that match the predominant color of the uniform top/bottom under the uniform top and/or bottom. All team members wearing an undergarment must wear the same color.
14. An American flag and or a commemorative/memorial patch not to exceed 2 by 3 inches and with the approval of the CYO Administration may be worn on each of the uniform apparel provided neither the flag nor patch interferes with the visibility of the team's name.
15. If a player wearing an illegal uniform or equipment attempts to enter the game or is discovered in the game, unnecessary delay shall be assessed the team, once per match. If the violation is specific to the uniform, the players may enter the set, and the illegal uniform be brought to the attention of the CYO. For illegal equipment, the player shall not enter the game until the illegal equipment is removed or made legal. For subsequent equipment violations by the same team, a point or side out shall be awarded.
16. Court:
 - a. 3rd - 8th Grade Divisions: The Court shall be 30' wide x 60' in length.
 - b. 1st - 2nd Grade Division: The Court shall be 30' wide x 48' in length
17. Ball:
 - a. Girls 8th Grade Division will use a NFHS regulation leather ball for all matches.
 - b. Boys 8th Grade Division may use a either NFHS regulation leather ball or Molten Flistatec V5M5000 for all matches.
 - c. All 6th and 4th grade divisions will use a Volley-Lite ball for each match.
 - d. The 2nd and 1st grade division will use Baden Oversized Soft-Light ball for each match.
 - e. CYO will provide each site the game ball for all matches.
 - f. Teams should bring their own balls to warm-up with; this is not the responsibility of the site.
18. Net:
 - a. The net shall be 3 feet wide and at least 32 feet in length.
 - b. 4th-8th Grade Divisions: The height of the net measured in the center shall be 7' 4-1/8"
 - c. 1st-2nd Grade Divisions: The height of the net measured in the center shall be between approximately 6' to 6' 6".
 - d. The net measurements at the ends shall not exceed these heights by more than 3/4".
 - e. Net antennas shall be attached to the net in line with the outside edge of the sideline.

D. PRE-CONTEST COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches must be CYO certified.
2. CYO Credentials are to be worn and visible at all times.
 - a. Credentials cannot be given to another coach at any time.
 - b. Coaches who give their credentials to another coach, even for one game, will have their coaching privileges revoked for one year.
 - c. If a coach has lost or forgotten their credential, they must inform the Site Director and show proof of certification with a photo ID and either the photo of the credential or the coach's name on the certification list.
3. Coaches are responsible for the supervision of their team before, during and after the match.
4. Coaches will provide one competent individual (16 years or older) to serve as a line judge.
5. At each match and practice, coaches are to have in their possession: an official team roster, a copy of each athlete's Pre-participation Form and Emergency Medical Authorization Form and a first aid kit.
6. A pre-match conference will be held between the officials, head coaches and captains. Each coach must submit their official CYO line-up sheet to the score table.
 - a. In the 2nd and 4th grade divisions, each coach must submit an official serving order to the scorer table.
7. Bench personnel are limited to players listed on the eligibility roster, and three (3) non-players. Non-players 16 years of age or older must be CYO certified. Non-players under the age of 9 are not allowed on the bench.
8. Each site director will provide the official ball as regulated by division for each match.
9. Please complete the scoresheets by writing the athlete's entire first and last name with their jersey number in numerical order.
 - a. If the athlete is a guest player, list the guest player's name after all of the athletes on the official team roster and put "GP" next to their name.

E. PARTICIPATION & ELIGIBILITY

1. Each athlete must be treated with dignity regardless of their ability.
2. A player on a CYO team MAY participate in two different leagues (i.e. JO, City league) during the CYO season; however a player MAY NOT be registered on two CYO Volleyball rosters during the same season.
3. 7th & 8th Grade Volleyball Athlete Eligibility
 - a. A member of an interscholastic (OHSAA) volleyball squad (any student who has played in a scrimmage, preview or regular season/tournament game as a substitute or starter) sponsored by the Board of Education shall not participate in a non-interscholastic program (tryouts, practice or contest) as an individual or a member of a team in the sport of volleyball during the school's season.
 - b. Non-interscholastic participation includes tryouts, training, practice and competition.
 - c. Violations of these rules WILL impact the athlete's status to participate on an interscholastic (OHSAA) volleyball squad.
4. If a coach chooses not to play a player because of missed practice, unsportsmanlike conduct, academics or injury, the coach must inform the official before the match begins and mark the player as not participating on the official score sheet.
5. Violation of any participation rules will result in a forfeit of the match and disciplinary action against the coach and/or member.
6. Late Arriving Players:
 - a. If a player arrives late to a match during the first set and the coach agrees to play them, the player is to meet the full participation requirement by the end of the second set.
 - b. If a player arrives at the match during the second set and the coach agrees to play them, the player is to meet one half of the participation requirement by the end of the second set.

- c. For 2nd and 4th grade teams – if a player arrives late to a match, the player is added to the bottom of the scoresheet.

F. GAME & TIME LIMITATION

1. No team or player is permitted to participate in more than the following number of sanctioned event tournaments and competitions in a season:
 - a. 8th & 6th Grade Divisions – Four (4)
 - b. 4th Grade Division – Three (3)
 - c. 2nd Grade Division – Two (2)
2. No team or player may play in more than the following number of matches in one day
 - a. 8th & 6th Grade Divisions – Three (3)
 - b. 4th & 2nd Grade Division - Two (2).
3. No team or player may play more than five (5) matches per week. The week runs Sunday through Saturday.
4. Events cannot start after 8:00 PM.
5. Events on Sunday cannot begin until 1:00 PM.
6. Practice sessions must be completed by 9:00 PM.
7. Teams failing to appear with the required number of players within 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time of a contest shall forfeit the game as declared by the assigned contest official.
 - a. If the contest is part of a scheduled tri-match, each contest is considered separate and has its own 15 minute grace period.

G. SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Substitutions may be made in case of an injury. If through injury, a player is unable to continue and all substitutes have entered the set, the injured player may be replaced under the following conditions:
 - a. The substitute was not in the set at the time of the injury.
 - b. The substitute has not already entered the set although they may have played in a different position in the serving order.
 - c. The injured player does not re-enter during the remainder of the set.

H. COURT PROTOCOL

1. Coin-flip – The team listed first on the team schedule will be the visiting team. The visiting team shall call the toss. The winner shall choose either to serve or receive. If necessary, prior to a deciding set of a match, the home captain shall call the toss. The winner shall choose the serve/receive or the playing area. The loser of the toss shall be given the remaining choice.
2. Teams do not change sides unless the official determines there is an advantage/disadvantage to one side.
3. At the end of the timed warm-up period and pre-match prayer, the official blows the whistle and directs the starting players to their respective end lines. The official blows a second whistle and signals the players onto the playing court. Then the official checks the line-ups for each team.
4. At the end of the set the official shall blow the whistle and signal “end of set” directing players to their respective end lines. With the players remaining on their respective end lines, the official visually confirms the score of the game with the scorer’s table; then blows the whistle, directs the teams to the appropriate team benches.
5. Bench Protocol
 - a. Teams shall occupy the bench located on the side of the net adjacent to their playing area throughout the match, including when teams switch sides for 2nd and 3rd sets.
 - b. After set #1, teams shall change playing areas and benches at the direction of the referee.
 - c. When directed to change courts, the non-playing team members proceed immediately to their new team bench, and the on-court players proceed counter clockwise along the sideline past the standard to their new team bench.

- d. When directed to do so, the teams proceed immediately to their respective team bench.
- e. 4th & 2nd Grade Division:
 - i. Once a coach sets the continuous rotation for the match, it remains the same for all three (3) sets.
 - ii. When set two (2) begins, players should take the court in the exact same positions that they were when set #1 ended. The serving team serves without rotating. When it is the opponent's turn to serve, they will also serve without rotating.
 - (a) The first server in set #2 is the same person as the last server in set #1. The same procedure will be followed for set #3.

I. WARM UP

- 1. Total warm up time is 10 minutes
 - a. Five (5) minutes- Visiting team practices on the full court, including serves
 - b. Five (5) minutes- Home team practices on the full court, including serves
- 2. Teams may shag the balls for their opponents until the opponent begins to serve.
- 3. Site Directors and Officials may not adjust warm-up time without permission from the Head Coach of each team.

J. TIME OUTS

- 1. Only the head coach is permitted to signal for a time out.
- 2. Each team is limited to two (2) time-outs per set.
- 3. Time-outs shall not exceed 60 seconds.
- 4. In case of injury, an official's time out will be held and then a replay.

K. SCORING AND STANDINGS

- 1. Rally scoring will be used at all levels.
- 2. Matches shall be the best two of three format.

L. CONTACT WITH THE BALL

- 1. Legal contact is a touch of the ball by any part of the player's body which does not allow the ball to visibly come to rest or involve prolonged contact with a player's body.
- 2. Illegal hits occur when a ball visibly comes to rest or has prolonged contact with a player during contact. The only valid criterion for judging an illegal hit is that of vision by the official. These include, but not limited to, a push, lifts, throw, or carry.

M. CEILING RULE

- 1. A ball striking the ceiling or an overhead obstruction shall remain in play during a volley provided the ball contacts the ceiling or obstruction on the side of the net extended occupied by the team which played last and provided the ball is legally played by the same team.
- 2. A serve cannot strike the ceiling or any other obstruction at any time.

N. REPLAY & RE-SERVE

- 1. A replay is considered to be a part of a single play action. Therefore, once a replay has been called, by the first referee, no requests, e.g., time-out, service order, lineup, substitution, etc., may be recognized until after the rally is completed.
- 2. A re-serve shall be called when the server releases the ball for service, then catches it or it drops to the floor without making any attempt to serve.
 - a. A player's term of service begins when the player assumes the right back position as the server and ends when a loss of rally is awarded.
 - i. Each player may only have one re-serve during their term of service

SECTION 2 - GUEST PLAYER RULE

If a team has less than 7 athletes at a match, a guest player may be moved from the member's other CYO volleyball team(s) to fill the positions at the start of a match under the following restrictions:

- 1. The athlete meets the age/grade restrictions of the squad they will assist.

2. The guest player is reported by means of the button on the Coaches Information page of ccdacle.org/cyo before the match in which they will be used.
3. The same individual may be moved as a guest player for no more than two (2) matches during the season.
4. The athlete complies with the number of games per day competition limits as outlined in Section 1-F.
5. The guest player(s) must meet the minimum participation requirement.
6. Guest player movements are to be reported on the following forms before the competition begins:
 - a. Volleyball Score Sheet - list the guest player's name after all of the athletes on the official team roster and put "GP" next to their name.
7. Guest player playing restrictions:
 - a. If the guest player is the sixth player on the roster, they must be positioned in the 6th serving order.
 - b. If the guest player is the seventh player on the roster, they cannot start the first set.
8. Uniform Requirements:
 - a. Guest players must wear the uniform of the team that they are playing on, not their rostered team uniform.
 - b. There are to be NO duplicated uniform numbers (teams should have at least one extra jersey to be borrowed by the Guest player for that match).
9. Guest players cannot be used for sanctioned event or CYO championship competitions.

SECTION 3 - 8TH GRADE DIVISION RULES

A. Participation

1. Teams of 12 or less dressed for a match.
 - a. Every player must start the first or second set.
 - b. Every player must play 3 consecutive positions by the end of the second set.
2. Teams of 13 or more dressed for a match.
 - a. Players that started the first set cannot start the second set.
 - b. Every player must play 3 consecutive positions by the end of the second set.
 - c. When either team reaches the 12th point in set #1 the Coach must substitute for number of players over 12.

B. Substitutions

A team will be allowed 18 substitutions per set.

C. Scoring & Standings

1. Set 1 and 2 shall score to 25 points with no cap (must win by 2 points).
2. Set 3 (if needed) shall score to 15 points with no cap (must win by 2 points).
3. Standing will be kept.

D. Service

1. The serving area will be provided beyond each end-line from sideline to sideline.
2. No serving limitations.

SECTION 4 - 6TH GRADE DIVISION RULES

A. Participation

1. Teams of 12 or less dressed for match.
 - a. Every player must start either the first or second set.
 - b. Every player must play 6 consecutive positions by the end of the second set.
 - c. Substitutions will not be permitted until each new starting player has met their 6 position participation requirement for the match.
 - i. A new starting player is defined as a player who has not yet started a set within the match.
 - ii. A substitute, non-starter, is not required to play a full 6 position rotation when entering the set.
 - d. Every player must complete a term-of-service before the end of the second set.

2. Teams of 13 or more dressed for the match.
 - a. Follow the rules described above in section '1' with one exception
 - b. Exception: When either team reaches the 12th point in set #1 the Coach must substitute for number of players over 12. If participation has not been met, every effort should be made to fulfill the "6 consecutive position" requirement by the end of the second set.

B. Substitutions

A team will be allowed 18 substitutions per set.

- Substitutions will not be permitted until each new starting player has met their 6 position participation requirement for the match.

C. Scoring & Standings

1. Set 1 and 2 shall score to 25 points with no cap (must win by 2 points).
2. Set 3 (if needed) shall score to 15 points with no cap (must win by 2 points).
3. Standing will be kept.

D. Service

1. The serving area will include an area that will be 6 feet in the court from the end-line and extend the entire width of the court.
2. Once a server has scored 5 consecutive points, the serve will be surrendered to the opposing team with no side out point being issued.

SECTION 5 - 4th GRADE DIVISION RULES

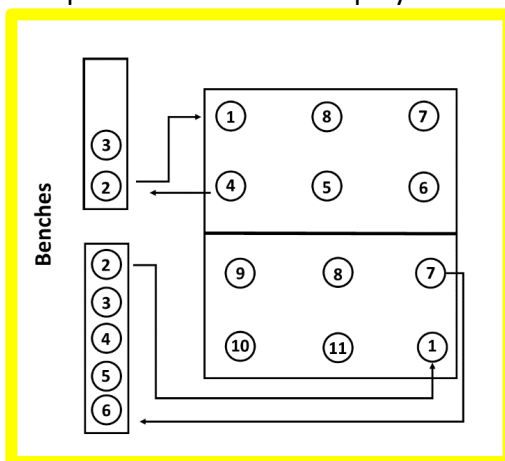
A. Participation

B. Teams will use a continuous rotation with new players entering from the bench to the right back position.

C. Substitutions

1. A continuous rotation shall be used for all three (3) sets of the match and will remain the same the entire match.

The numbers on this diagram represent the order the players will serve.



D. Scoring & Standings

1. Set 1 and 2 shall score to 21 points with cap at 25 (must win by 2 points or first to 25).
2. Set 3 (if needed) shall score to 15 points with cap at 25 (must win by 2 points or first to 25).
3. Teams will play three sets per match. If the third set is to decide the winner of the match it will be played through to its conclusion, as noted above. If a team has already won two sets, the third set must be played (it is not optional) shall conclude ten (10) minutes before the scheduled start time of next match, no score will be posted if the match has been decided. The official will officiate the third set.
 - a. If the 3rd set is a NON deciding set, on their first serve during a term-of-service the server will have a second attempt to get the ball over the net if they miss their first attempt.
4. Standings will not be kept.

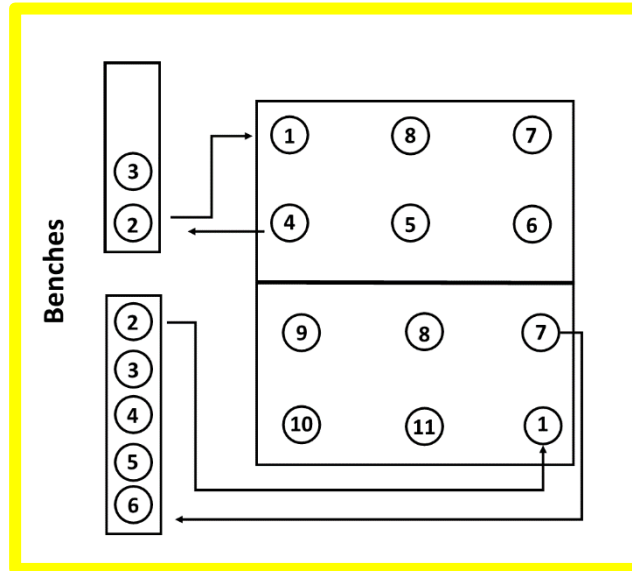
E. Service

1. 4th Grade Division: The serving area will include an area that will be 10 feet in the court from the end-line and extend the entire width of the court.
2. Once a server has scored 3 consecutive points, the serve will be surrendered to the opposing team with no side out point being issued.

SECTION 6 – 2nd GRADE DIVISION RULES

A. Participation

- a. Teams will use a continuous rotation with new players entering from the bench to the right back position.



- B. Substitutions: A continuous rotation shall be used for all three (3) sets of the match and will remain the same the entire match.

D. Scoring & Standings

1. Set 1 and 2 shall score to 21 points with cap at 25 (must win by 2 points or first to 25).
2. Set 3 (if needed) shall score to 15 points with cap at 25 (must win by 2 points or first to 25).
3. Teams will play three sets per match. If the third set is to decide the winner of the match it will be played through to its conclusion, as noted above. If a team has already won two sets, the third set must be played (it is not optional) shall conclude fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start time of next match, no score will be posted if the match has been decided. The official will officiate the third set.
 - a. If the 3rd set is a NON deciding set, on their first serve during a term-of-service the server will have a second attempt to get the ball over the net if they miss their first attempt.
4. Standings will not be kept.

F. Service

1. The serving area will include an area that will be 5 feet in the court from the end-line and extend the entire width of the court.
2. Once a server has scored 3 consecutive points, the serve will be surrendered to the opposing team with no side out point being issued.

SECTION 7 - CAUTION AND DISQUALIFICATION

- A. Teams are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that the game officials and CYO administration feel shows respect and dignity towards its opponent.

1. To help give all athletes the opportunity to play, CYO encourages coaches to make appropriate decisions when leading by 15 points or more.
 2. Celebrations that do not uphold the dignity of the opponent are prohibited.
- B. Excessive celebration(s) is considered to be a disqualification (yellow/red) when the set is delayed or a player(s) draws attention to themselves. *This can include but not limited to, ace cheers, slam cheers, and dances.*
- C. From the whistle signaling for the serve until contact with the ball is made by the server, there shall be no deliberate outbursts or distraction by any opponent on the floor or in the bench area. This includes the opponent's coaches or their fans.
- D. Violations for any of the above will be assessed as follows:
1. Warning
 2. Yellow card on the head coach
 3. Red card on the head coach (ejection of head coach)
 4. Forfeit of the match
- E. Whenever an official issues a card, the player, coaches, the scorer and the other officials shall be notified of the reason for the caution or disqualification.
- F. Red carded coaches and adults must immediately leave the competition area. Red-carded players must remain supervised by a coach or other adult.
- G. Athletes, coaches, parents, and fans who have been ejected, asked to leave, or removed by Officials or CYO personnel must depart immediately. If they refuse to leave the premises immediately, one week is added to their suspension. Their suspension begins the next day, with no option to appeal. There may be additional consequences and disciplinary actions for those individuals as stated below and in Bylaw 10.
- H. H. Anyone besides the coach or athlete on the team that enters the court or field of play is immediately suspended for one week and may be suspended for a longer time as determined by CYO Administration.
- I. I. Athletes who are ejected, asked to leave, or removed from an athletic event are automatically prohibited from attending any practices or CYO games for seven days including sanctioned events. They may not be on the premises of the next CYO scheduled game of any grade and may not attend or participate in any sanctioned event games during the seven-day period.
- J. J. Coaches who are ejected, asked to leave, or removed from an athletic event are automatically prohibited from attending any practice or CYO games for fourteen days including sanctioned events. They may not attend or be on the premises of the next two CYO scheduled games of any grade and may not attend any sanctioned event games during the fourteen-day period.
- K. K. Parents or fans who are ejected, asked to leave, or removed from an athletic event are automatically prohibited from attending any practices or CYO games for twenty-one days including sanctioned events. They may not attend or be on the premises of the next three CYO scheduled games of any grade and may not attend any sanctioned event games during the twenty-one-day period.
- L. L. Athletes, coaches, parents, or fans who are ejected, asked to leave, or removed from an event for a second time are not permitted to attend any competitions for the remainder of the season, including tournaments.
- M. M. Coaches ejected, asked to leave, or removed from an event for the second time in the same season will immediately surrender their coach's credential to the Site Director or Member Administration.

(Updated March 2026)