

Mud Volleyball Rules of Play

OVERALL: If a rule is not covered here, the rules used in the City of Columbus will be the guide. Most of those rules are identical to USVBA and Ohio High School Rules.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT:

Pool Play: Each team is scheduled for 5 games in the morning pool play (for full 6-team nets). There will be a cut-off for morning games at 1:00 PM.

Seeding: Advanced pool play. The winner of the pool advances to Division 1 for the Playoff Round, the runner-up in the morning pool advances to Division 2 and so on. All teams, no matter where they finish advance to a division in the Playoff Round. If two or more teams in the pool have identical records, ties are broken (*See Pool Play Tie Breaking Rules*).

Playoff Round: Each team is guaranteed at least 1 scheduled game in the afternoon single elimination Playoff Round. Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 will play immediately after lunch period. Divisions 5 and 6 will begin 30 minutes later.

GAME RULES:

- 1. Team Composition:** A team consists of a maximum of 8 players and a minimum of 6 players. 3 females must be on the court at all times during the match.
- 2. Forfeits:** Teams that do not show up on time are subject to a forfeit. There is no grace period for any game throughout the tournament. Forfeits count as a victory for the team that was present and a loss for the team that failed to show up.
- 3. First Service:** The team listed first in each match-up will serve first.
- 4. Team Sides:** Teams do not switch sides during pool play. Teams may switch sides during the Playoff Round at the referee's discretion.
- 5. Scoring:** RALLY SCORING. During pool play, score begins at 0-0. The first team to score 15 points or more with a 2-point advantage is the winner of the game. If the game goes beyond 15 points, the first team scoring 17 points wins. Speed scoring games, if necessary, are determined in the same manner. During the Playoff Round, score begins at 0-0. RALLY SCORING, with the first team to 25 points winning. Team must win by 2 points. There is no point cap.
- 6. Pool Play Time Limit:** There is no time limit, although games are estimated to last less than 15 minutes. Morning Pool Play must be completed by 1:00 PM. Teams and referees must keep the games on their courts moving quickly in order to complete morning play.
- 7. Playoff Round Time Limit:** There is no limit in the Playoff Round. All games are played to their conclusion.
- 8. Rotation:** The rotation must be in a clockwise direction. All rotations must eventually bring each player to the front and back rows in a predictable fashion.

9. **Front Row:** A limit of 3 designated front row spikers/blockers is in effect at all times.
10. **Time Outs:** One 30-second time out is permitted per game by each team.
11. **Injury Time Outs:** If play is temporarily suspended due to an injury, the injured player must leave the court for at least 1 serve. A team may drop below the minimum player requirements for the current game in case of an injury.
12. **Serving:** Teams rotate when receiving the serve, even on the first serve. Serves that touch the net are considered a side-out.

TEAM PLAY:

1. **Serves:** The server is the back right player. The server must be positioned within 3 feet of the back line (either in front of or behind). This means the server may be on the court. Men must serve underhand. Loading the ball with mud is not permitted.
2. **Serve Reception:** All serves must be taken with a legal hit. In general, this implies a bump (pass). A very easy serve may be taken with a setting motion, but that motion must be executed perfectly. A serve may not be spiked or blocked by the opposing team.
3. **Body Hits:** A ball may be played by any part of the body above the knee.
4. **Number of Hits:** Each team may touch the ball up to 3 times while the ball is on their side of the net. Touches off of blocks do not count as hits. The ball may be hit by any combination of men and/or women. Unlike standards of co-recreational, it does not have to be touched by a woman.
5. **Spikes:** Spiking is performed with one hand. Two-handed spikes are a violation. Only front row players may spike in front of the 10' line. Again, men or women may spike.
6. **Blocks:** Blocking is normally performed with two hands. Blockers may penetrate the plane of the net and may execute a "power" block. Directed blocks (catch and throw the ball down) are not permitted. Only the 3 front row players may block.
7. **Net Violations:** It is a violation to touch the net once the ball is in play. Incidental touches that do not affect the play may be overlooked, but clear net violations will be called.
8. **Ball Handling:** It is a violation to carry, lift, hold or throw the volleyball.
9. **Substitutions:** Substitutions can be made at any time, but not to the point that they slow down the game. Each team may select one of the following substitution patterns for each game:
 - a. **Standard Volleyball:** Same gender players can replace one another, but cannot also replace other players. For instance, if Tom replaces Fred, Fred may only go back in place of Tom. Tom and Fred can replace each other as many times as they wish.
 - b. **Mud Variation:** Players can rotate in a predictable position, usually either the serving position or at the front left position or both. Players may only enter when their team receives a side-out. Men must substitute for men and women must substitute for women.

EQUIPMENT:

1. **Court Dimensions:** The court is 30'x 60' (official volleyball size). Only a general midline is in effect. For safety sake, players should not invade adjacent or opposing courts. The referees will estimate the 10' line.
2. **Shoes:** All participants must wear shoes at all times. It is advisable to use duct tape to secure your shoes.
3. **Nets:** Nets are installed per regulation guidelines. Due to the MUD surfaces, expect some net sag. Referees may request that the nets be tightened. The nets will be as close to co-recreational height (7'4 ¼") as resources allow.

REFEREES:

1. **Pool Play Referees:** Subject to referee availability, games will have referees assigned to them. Nets without assigned referees may be self-refereed.
2. **Playoff Round Referees:** All playoff games will have at least one experienced referee assigned to them.
3. **Refereeing:** The rules are subject to a referee's interpretation. All referee decisions are final. Protests may be directed to the Head Referee.
4. **Referee Abuse:** Any player or fan abusing or arguing with a referee will be asked to leave the immediate area. Failure to leave the area will cause his/her team to forfeit that game. A player ejected from a game will not be permitted to participate in any future games during the tournament.

POOL PLAY-PLAYOFF ROUND COMPETITION:

After pool play, the winner of the pool advances to Division 1 for the Playoff Round, the runner-up in the morning pool advances to Division 2 and so on. All teams, no matter where they finish advance to a division in the Playoff Round. If two or more teams in the pool have identical records, ties are broken in the following manner:

POOL PLAY TIE-BREAKING RULES:

1. If two teams are tied, the winner of their head-to-head meeting during pool play is the higher division.
2. If three or more teams are tied, the team with the best record against the other tied teams advances first. Eliminate teams and re-compute as needed. Revert to Rule 1 if necessary.
3. If ties cannot be broken by Rule 1 or 2 (teams have identical records against each other), then a random method supervised by the Head Referee determines the order of the finish. Pool play game scores are never considered in the process.
4. Space permitting on the scoreboards, teams with tied pool play records may both be placed into a higher division at the discretion of the Head Referee. This rule supersedes Rule 1, 2 or 3. This Rule is likely to be invoked when no clear-cut pool play winner can be determined.