

Handbook for Paid, Uniformed Referees

Lone Star Region of the USAV

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Note: Rule book references in this document refer to the 2023-2025 USAV Indoor Rules Book as presented by USA Volleyball.



Introduction

Here is an updated version of the Handbook for Paid Referees (2023-24). Thank you to Jordan Bennett, Kevin Carlyle, Brian Gibbs, David Plaisance, Rich Richardson, and Steven Wohlschlaeger for their time in editing this updated handbook. There are many changes and updated procedures that we will follow and or enforce during this upcoming season. We invite you in the LSR to contact us if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions on how to improve this Paid Referee Handbook, and please contact us if you find any errors.

Changes to the Paid Referee Handbook since it was last published:

This edition of the Paid Referee Handbook has changes in this 2023 release of the document. Please read the changes and rules completely. If you have input, please use the Change Request Form at the back of the document.

CHANGES:

Page 4: For applicants that only want/need to be second referees, send in two R2 ratings only. These two ratings must be completed by two different raters.

Page 5: REGIONAL REFEREE REQUIREMENT: (NEW IN 2023-24) For anyone moving up to Regional Referee, you “must” also obtain a **Provisional SCORER** certification.

1. If you are a prior Regional referee, you “must” obtain a **Provisional SCORER** certification at the latest during the season of your re-certification.
2. Regional Referees will not have to continue a **scorer’s certification** after the first two seasons unless you desire. However, you will be required to send 2 completed scoresheets (from a live match) to the referee chair during the season of your re-certification.

Page 5: Submit Ratings: **Preferred method – e-mail it “only”** as an attachment to iokepa1@yahoo.com. **PLEASE, DO NOT** send your ratings with a photo of your rating in the “body” of your e-mail, nor send it in your Google Account where I must ask permission to see your rating form.

Page 6: As of 2023 Mizuno has created an authorized referee shirt in the colors of blue, white and red. This shirt has the USAV logo embroidered on the left sleeve, and the Mizuno logo on the right side of the chest. You can only obtain this shirt from USAV at a national tournament. All 3 colors are authorized to be worn in the LSR. If you wear this shirt, you must wear your patch either in the middle or on the left chest. Do not cover or put your patch under the Mizuno logo.

As of 2023 USAV has created a new (smaller) referee patch. It is at a referee’s discretion if they would like to wear the large (old) or smaller (new) patch. It is not a requirement to wear a small patch. If you’d like to obtain a small patch, the cost is \$5.00...contact the referee chair to obtain one.

Page 7: If a jacket with a zipper is worn, it “must” be zipped at least $\frac{1}{2}$ way to $\frac{3}{4}$. It is not to be worn wide open.

Page 10: It is **unethical** to accept other assignments (even with other organizations) once you accepted the first one from the LSR, and it can lead up to and include suspension. **Know**



that AES will allow you to register for more than one tournament on the same day(s), but it is **YOUR** responsibility to unregister from unaccepted tournaments once you have been accepted by one of them.

Page 11: TRAVEL – Out of town officials (hotel room policy)

Page 23: NEW 2023-24: If it is determined that a coach is attempting to protest a judgment call, the R1 must indicate this to the coach. The R1 will also indicate to the coach that if the protest committee agrees that it is a judgment call, a **RED CARD** (penalty) sanction will be administered to the coach. The game will continue immediately.

Page 33-34: Due to the possibility of line judges having to move quickly, flip-flops, fuzzy slippers, and any type of sandals are **not allowed** to be worn by line judges, **unless** there is either a strap on the back of the footwear, or it is fully enclosed around the entire foot. Being barefoot or only wearing socks is not allowed.

Page 34: uniform numbers must be clearly visible and centered side to side on the front and back of the jersey. Numbers are recommended to be placed on the upper half of the jersey. Numbers may not extend below the player’s waist and may not be tucked into the uniform bottom. The number color **must** contrast with jersey color, uniform design is identical for team but not Libero, etc... **NOTE:** If numbers on the front of the jersey are lowered below the chest area, 6” numbers should be used and not 4” to ensure visibility for the referees and scorer.

Page 40-41: 2023-25 USAV Rules Commission rules Changes Summary

Pages 41-43: HIROS (Harassment Incident Report – Officials & Staff)

Registration Required

To become certified as a USAV referee one must first join USAV by registering through the Lone Star Region at www.lsvolleyball.org and using the tab ‘Membership.’ To work with juniors, the applicant must also obtain a required USAV background check (every season). The background check is completed during the registration process when “**working with juniors**” is selected. Every season you will also need to certify through SafeSport (instructions below). If you have trouble with registration, SafeSport, or the background check, please contact Karen Tarmon, LSR Registrar, at LSRregistrar@gmail.com.

Certification as a Referee

To be certified as a referee you are required to meet several requirements beyond USAV registration and getting the background check. For applicants that only want/need to be second referees, send in two R2 ratings only. These two ratings must be completed by two different raters. *LSR requirements require all Provisional and Regional referees to “**complete**” their certification “**before**” Regionals. If their certification is not complete, they*



will not be allowed to officiate in any LSR Regionals. All requirements are listed on the LSR website as stated below:

Requirements to become a Certified Referee in the Lone Star Region

Completed certifications are good for **two** seasons.

All items below must be fulfilled within the same USAV season to complete a certification.

Referee

2. Be a member of USAV Volleyball in the Lone Star Region
3. Complete a USAV/LSR Registration, Background Check, and SafeSport Certification
4. Attend a referee clinic (pay the \$25 clinic fee)
5. Take the appropriate exam and obtain a passing score.
6. Submit two individual ratings, one must be as an R1 for junior, provisional, and regional certifications. If referee candidacy is for Adult R2 or Junior R2 certification, then two- second referee ratings are required: These must be accomplished by two different raters.
Junior, Adult R2 and Provisional Certification—must be rated by a Regional or higher-certified referee on a Lone Star Region rating form at a scrimmage, match, tournament, or any event using USAV rules;
Regional Certification—must be rated by Junior National or higher-certified referee (on the USAV rating form) in a tournament or match setting. Regional certifications must be accomplished while refereeing a 14's or older age group for this rating.
7. **REGIONAL REFEREE REQUIREMENT: (NEW IN 2023-24)** For anyone moving up to Regional Referee, you "must" also obtain a **Provisional SCORER** certification.
 1. If you are a prior Regional referee, you "must" obtain a **Provisional SCORER** certification at the latest during the season of your re-certification.
 2. Regional Referees will not have to continue a **scorer's certification** after the first two seasons unless you desire. However, you will be required to send 2 completed scoresheets (from a live match) to the referee chair during the season of your re-certification.

Send completed ratings to:

Joe Campbell
5110 Binion Forest Lane
Spring, TX. 77389-1468
or

Preferred method – e-mail it "only" as an attachment to iokepa1@yahoo.com. PLEASE, DO NOT send your ratings with a photo of your rating in the "body" of your e-mail, nor send it in your Google Account where I must ask permission to see your rating form.

The above information is noted at least twice in every clinic.

Prospective referees can get an overview of clinics, the certification process, and assignments by going to www.lsvolleyball.org and looking under the 'Official's Clinics and Info' tab. Here you will find the upcoming referee clinics and clinician, under the "Paid Ref Tournament" hyperlink, and other certification requirements. When on the website use the 'Reference' tab, then 'Lone Star Region Forms' tab, and you will find the official's application, score sheets, rating sheets, lineup sheets, Libero tracking sheets, and more, which you can become familiar with over time.



If you are a paid USAV member you can review study materials in your personal **sportengine** page (<https://my.sportngin.com>) to prepare for the Form A, C or D exam and the required clinic. These materials include modules, videos, and more.... a great free training site. This site **does not** substitute for a clinic. Taking a clinic or test in your academy **does not** meet the Lone Star Region requirements. This site is only for members as a benefit of USAV membership.

I also encourage you to visit the [USAV Referee Resources](#) page to review Rules and Interpretations, Certification Requirements, Training Courses and Materials, SafeSport, and Governance.

Being certified as a referee is only the start. It is critical that every referee keeps up to date on the rules, mechanics, and interpretations. Therefore, volleyball referees must continually be a student of the game and go beyond just reading the rule book. Volleyball officials must know back-row faults, positional faults, ball handling, rotation of players, Libero rules, scoring, and how to handle disruptive coaches and so on. This requires the referee to study a multitude of materials and watch other referees to be on top of their game. *It is also a requirement for LSR Paid Referees to attend the Referee for Pay (R4P) clinic each year.* They will take the test and obtain ratings **only** in the year of their recertification. Other years they will attend the R4P clinic as an OBSERVER.

National-Level Referee Requirements

As a National-Level Referee (Jr National & National) in the Lone Star Region, you are required to obtain a minimum of 30 hours of service within the region. When a referee earns the Jr National certification, the referee chair will send you the 30-hour spreadsheet, and a list of opportunities to earn the 30 hours.

Referee Equipment

Referee Equipment is specified by the USAV, and one can review the information at www.lsvolleyball.org. Here is the list recommended for referees:

UNIFORM FOR VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS – A polo-style shirt that is one of three (3) approved colors (white, grey, or blue), with the following specifications*:

- Approved official designation on the left sleeve (“Volleyball Certified Official”), which is protected by copyright.
- Long or short sleeves
- Certification patch placed on the right chest area*

In 2023, Mizuno created blue, white, and red authorized referee shirts. These shirts have the USAV logo embroidered on the left sleeve, and the Mizuno logo on the right



side of the chest. You can only obtain this shirt from USAV at a national tournament. All 3 colors are authorized to be worn in the LSR. If you wear this shirt, you must wear your patch either in the middle or on the left chest. Do not cover or put your patch under the Mizuno logo.

- In 2023, USAV created a new (smaller) referee patch. It is at a referee's discretion if they would like to wear the large (old) or smaller (new) patch. If you'd like to obtain a small patch, the cost is \$5.00...contact the referee chair to obtain one.
- Earning your USAV patch: As a new referee, you will not earn your USAV patch until you have met the following: attended the R4P clinic, paid your \$25 clinic fee, successfully passed test C, turned into the Referee Chair a passed R1 and R2 rating by a Regional or higher referee. Regional referees will not receive a regional patch until you have completed 2 full seasons as a Provisional referee, and met the following criteria: all of the above except, passed test A, turned into the Referee Chair a passed R1 and R2 rating by a Jr National or National referee. All patches are awarded by the Referee Chair.
- For matches played using USAV rules, the appropriate **USAV patch** is worn as noted above.
- Regarding the variations of uniform colors: each region can determine whether the referees must be in the same color. For the LSR, we request that referees dress the same when working a Gold Finals match.
- Line judges and scorers do not need to match each other in color, nor do they need to match the referees.
- The white shirt is the default, so all officials must own a white shirt.
- The complete uniform must be clean, wrinkle free, fit correctly (**not excessively tight**) and without stains.

Dark navy-blue **slacks** that are pressed and in good repair (not faded).

Black or dark navy-blue leather **belt** (if slacks have belt loops, a belt is mandatory).

Shoes and socks that meet the following specifications:

- Clean, white athletic shoes (leather or leather-like material preferred)
- Non-marking rubber soles
- No exposed "coils" (for example, the "Z-Coil" style)
- All white socks, at least crew length

Optional outerwear that may be worn while officiating a match, if permitted by the region or head referee

- *Sport-Tek* ¼ Zip Sweatshirt – white, with approved official embroidered designation on the left sleeve ("Volleyball Certified Official")



- Lightweight Jacket – white, with approved official embroidered designation on the left sleeve (“Volleyball Certified Official”)

Guidelines for wearing:

- If a certification patch is worn, it should be affixed in the right chest area.
- Line judges and scorers do not have to match the referees regarding outerwear.
- A uniform shirt must be worn underneath.
- Zipper should be placed in an appropriate location to allow the collar to be worn “polo-style” (not zipped to the top)
- If a jacket with a zipper is worn, it “must” be zipped at least ½ way to ¾. It is not to be worn wide open.
- Sleeves will not be pushed up.
- Nothing stored in the pockets.

Other equipment for referees:

- Whistle attached to a lanyard (non-pea preferred)
- Red and Yellow sanction cards (*must be concealed from view*)
- Timing device that can track minutes and seconds
- Ball gauge with needle
- Ball pump
- Net measuring device
- Tossing coin
- Current USAV Rule Book
- Current copy of the USAV Case Book (printed or on digital device)
- Flags, when officiating with junior crew
- Referee bag for small equipment needed at the playing court

Patches are worn on the right chest of the referee shirt (unless the Mizuno shirt). You can use Velcro, sew them on, or use magnetic fasteners as a good alternative (these can be found at various online uniform suppliers to include Amazon).

Vendor for shirts

- 2020 Brand Solutions, <http://vbofficialsgear.com/>

Volleyball Equipment Vendors

- Roof Sportswear, Verna Klubnikin, www.roofsportswear.com
- Great Lakes Apparel, Mary Malpede, www.greatlakesapparel.com
- Time Out For Sports, Nancy Sommer, www.timeoutforsports.net
- Amazon, www.amazon.com



Getting Your Assignment

Once the uniform and equipment are ready, the clinic and exam have been taken, registration is done, ratings are finished, and hopefully there have been some completed practice matches--it is time to begin the process of signing up for tournaments that use paid, uniformed referees. There are two ways to sign up as a referee at the tournaments that use paid referees in the Lone Star Region, please be aware of both methods as not all tournament hosts use the Advanced Events System (AES). Here is an overview of what needs to be done as LSR personnel will not assign anyone; availability needs to be completed by the referee and then head referees/schedulers will select the referees needed to staff a tournament.

Signing Up for Lone Star Region Tournaments

- Go to www.lsvolleyball.org
- Use the tab "Officials Clinics & Info"
- Use the hyperlink "Paid Referee Tournaments"
- Scroll down until you see the spreadsheet
- We have over 300 tournaments using Paid, Uniformed Referees
- Two separate ways to sign up and be considered (not guaranteed):
 - AES (instructions are at the end of the webpage and below), or
 - Contacting the Head Referee/Scheduler direct by e-mail or phone

AES:

- The first step in registering for AES tournaments is to create an account on the website at www.advancedeventsystems.com.
 1. Click 'Create Account'
 2. Click 'Create Official'
 3. Complete the demographic information (asterisks show required fields)
 4. Click 'Create Official Account'
- To see/register for tournaments, login using your username/password.
 1. Click "Official"
 2. Choose "Current Events" (you will want to sort at least by state – TEXAS)



3. Find the tournament you want to work and choose the radio button in the register column, then click “Register” at the bottom of the page; currently you must register for one tournament at a time.
4. After registering you will get an email confirming your registration intent
5. The assigner will receive an email noting your registration intent. (Note: in the example below that an AES tournament is designated in the ‘notes’ column)
6. Once the assigner has a schedule from the event host, he/she will begin notifying everyone who registered if they are accepted to work or not. It is important that once you’ve registered that you keep that date open for acceptance and assignment.
7. If after you’ve been accepted you must remove yourself from working a tournament due to an emergency situation, you cannot do this in AES. You “**must**” contact the assigner via phone or e-mail and let them know.

OR

Contacting Head Referee/Scheduler (Non-AES):

- * Not all tournaments use AES, some use other scheduling software/methods
- * Please note that in many cases you have to contact the Head Ref/Scheduler directly
- * As you can see below, AES is indicated in the “Notes” column
- * If AES is not noted, you must contact the Scheduler by email/phone/text and let them you know that you are available to work that specific tournament.

In the example below you would contact Ricardo Elizondo by email (because AES is not used to register for this tournament) and let him know that you are available to referee at the Spike Sport Classic on 4/6/2024.



Tournament	Date	Location	Scheduler	Cell #	E-Mail	Age(s)	Notes
APRIL							
Lone Star Classic #1	4/06-08/24	DALLAS, TX	Gloria Cox	281.389.5425	gloria-cox@austin.rr.com	11's & 13's	**AES
Final Countdown	04/06/24	Buda	Craig Smith	915.355.5043	csmithvb@sbcglobal.net	11's-12's	**AES
Spike Sport Classic	04/06/24	Houston	Ricardo Elizondo	832.217.5890	usavhouston@gmail.com	15's	

NOTE: Before you can sign up to referee for pay as a uniformed referee, you must be a USAV/Lone Star Region registered member, have completed your current annual SafeSport certification, and have a completed background check (usually 5-7 days are needed for the report to be completed). This is for insurance and litigation reasons, and it is not negotiable. Complete your registration and background check early in order to be eligible to work.

Important: If you sign up for more than one tournament on the same day, it is **“MANDATORY”** that you contact the other head referees once you have been accepted to work a tournament. *It is unethical to accept other assignments (even with other organizations) once you accepted the first one from the LSR, and it can lead up to and include suspension.* Know that AES will allow you to register for more than one tournament on the same day(s), but it is **YOUR** responsibility to unregister from unaccepted tournaments once you have been accepted by one of them.

TRAVEL – Out of town officials (hotel room policy)

In the Lone Star Region, there is a hotel policy rule for referees that live more than 50 miles from their home to the venue where they will referee. A referee that lives more than 50 miles (most direct travel), from their home to the venue where they will work, is authorized to be lodged at a local hotel that will be selected and paid for by the tournament host. The monies used to pay for this hotel room will come from the tournament referee fund. Referees will be housed with 2 to a room, and if a referee wishes to bring their spouse or significant other, the referee must pay ½ the total room costs.

Your Big Assignment – What to Expect

You arrive at the playing site, ready for your big day. Much like the first few weeks at a new job, you’re unsure what to expect. Will I get along with my boss and co-workers? What is acceptable behavior, dress, and what is not? Will I be closely supervised, or left to fend for myself? And when do I get to take a break?



What to Expect – Before Play Begins

Most days start early with an expectation that you will arrive at your court more than 30 minutes before play begins. Most facilities do not have a changing room, come dressed but change into white shoes on site. Sometimes there is a short meeting conducted by the head referee and these will start more than half an hour before the first scheduled match, so **don't be late!** The head referee might cover the format for warm-ups, the number of sets per match, specific rules that need extra attention and the assignments for the first match if not sent by email earlier. If you working the first match, you will need to take a game ball, score sheet(s), scorer materials, and be at your court 30 minutes prior to the start time. It is extremely important to get started on time, since a late start impacts all matches on that court for the rest of that wave or day. Be sure to know if a National Anthem is being played or not. It is critical that you look professional and conduct yourself in a manner that provides a positive impression.

The Big Pre-Game Talk, Part I: Captain's Meeting

Once you arrive at your court, you'll conduct a short meeting with the captains of the playing teams. This meeting should start as soon as both teams are present. Go over the ground rules for your court as needed, including pointing out any overhead obstructions, SportCourt rules and describe the rules regarding adjacent courts, if pertinent. Ask the captains if they have any questions, then conduct the coin toss. Assign heads to one team, and tails to the other, as there is no home and visitors. Toss the coin (which should be at least as big as a quarter) and catch it (do **NOT** flip it over after you catch it). The winner of the toss may choose to: 1) serve, 2) receive, or 3) start the set on a specific side of the court. If the winner picks either serve or receive, the other captain gets to choose the side they start on. If the winner picks their side, the other captain can choose either to serve or receive.

Timed Warm-Ups

You will need to administer the timed pre-match warm-ups for both teams. Most tournaments will have two (2) minutes of shared court time for ball handling, where the teams can warm up on their side of the court only. Then each team will have the entire court to themselves for four (4) minutes. The serving team gets the first warm-up period, followed by the receiving team. Coaches normally expect to be notified when one minute remains in their exclusive court time. Many teams will choose to serve during the final minute, but the participants can use their warm-up time however they want. The key for you is **good time management**; keep on top of the warm-ups, instructions, and starting time so your court starts about 12 minutes after the end of the previous match. The two minutes of shared court time starts as soon as the court is cleared. The coin toss should



occur during these two minutes. The pre-match warm-ups may be administered by your R2 if you need to leave your court to key in scores from the previous match or use the restroom.

The Big Pre-Game Talk, Part II: Instructing the Work Team

While the participating teams are warming up, you should talk to your “work team.” This is the team that will be providing a second referee (R2), two (2) line judges, and three (3) workers for the scorer’s table (scorer, asst. scorer, visual scorer). Your R2 will usually be a coach, but other rostered adults (such as a parent) and players are allowed to R2 after they have attended a clinic, and the age group playing is 16 or above. The rest of the work team will almost always be players. Here’s one way to approach the pre-match conversations with your work team:

- Talk with the scorer, asst. scorer, and visual scorer first. Briefly explain what is expected from them, ask them if they have done this before, and ask if they have any questions. Be sure the scorer knows the proper signal to communicate that he/she is ready after an interruption (two hands up, palms toward the court; see signal #12). Make sure everyone at the table understands that they are **not** to use phones or music devices at any time during the match, including during time-outs and between sets. (Note: a phone may be used “only” to check the time at the end of a set) They should also not have food or drink on the table during the match.
- Talk with the line judges next. Make this discussion interactive – have them demonstrate the proper signals and describe when to use them (Diagram 12, signals #1 through #5 when using flags; Diagram 11, signals #9, #14, #15, and #24 without flags). Tell them where to go during time-outs (to the center of the end line) and when you expect them to make a call. One helpful acronym for the line judge’s responsibilities is FLAT – **F**oot faults, **L**ine calls, **A**ntenna calls, and **T**ouches. Be sure their shoes are appropriate (*see the “Line Judge Footwear” section below*). The rules about phones and music players apply to the line judges as well. When the season is well under way, don’t spend a lot of time with the scorer, asst. scorer or line judges, because they have heard it many times already.
- Finally, discuss your expectations with the R2. First and foremost, be sure they have a whistle! Remind them of their primary responsibility during the play: to watch for and whistle violations of the net and centerline. Also be sure they understand that they should whistle and signal all interruptions (substitutions, time-outs, lineup checks, *etc.*). Tell them that you expect all the coaches’ requests to go through the R2 – a coach should **never** approach the scorer’s table directly to ask for information. Ask if they have a timing device to time all time-outs, time after an



injury, and between sets. Lastly, remind them to give the “ready signal” (Signal #12) after the scorer has done so after substitutions and time-outs.

What to Expect – During Your Match

You have briefed your work crew, and the teams are warmed up and ready to play. All of your work up until now has prepared you for this moment – climbing up on the stand and refereeing a match. (**NOTE**: an official referee stand “**must**” be used. A table, ladder or chair is **not** authorized. If there is no stand, the R1 must referee while standing on the court). The big question now: do you have any idea what you are supposed to do? Hopefully you have taken care of all the details leading up to the match, and by taking care of these details the participants will now trust you to conduct the match in a fair and unbiased manner. Before the teams take the court, they will line up on their respective end line. Once on the stand, blow your whistle and direct them to the net so they can shake hands and wish each other good luck. After the teams shake hands at the net, the teams will line up in rotational order so the R2 can verify that their positions match the submitted line-up. The R2 should have the captain give a small wave to the R1. If Liberos are planning to enter the court, this will take place once the line-ups have been checked. The R2 should give you the “ready” signal (signal #12), and now you are ready to go!

Prior to every rally, you will scan the court to ensure everyone is ready to play. Start your scan with the receiving team’s side of the court, checking the team’s bench and court for anything that needs to be addressed. Also check that the line judge on the receiving team’s side is ready. Be sure your R2 is in position and not distracted. Do the same with your scorer’s table. Then check the serving team’s bench, court, and line judge. The entire scan should only take a second or two if everything is in order. (Note that your scan might be slightly different, depending on the location of the scorer’s table in the facility. However, it should always start on the receiving team’s side, and end with the serving team). If there is a request for a time-out (signal #4) or substitution (signal #5), your R2 should blow their whistle loudly with a ‘double whistle’ and signal properly. You **do not** repeat the signal, nor do you whistle. Be sure that the proper protocol is followed. If the R2 does not blow their whistle, you as the R1 should whistle AND signal – there should never be a timeout or substitution without someone blowing a whistle! During time-outs, be sure to keep time, in case the R2 becomes distracted at the scorer’s table. Once your scan is complete and everyone is ready, blow your whistle and authorize the serve with a “beckon” (signal #1).

To initiate the serve on a playable surface, the server may not step off the playable surface at any time during their serving action. Before beckoning for serve, you should confirm that the server is in complete contact with the playing surface. This most commonly applies to Sport Court laid on top of a concrete floor; the server must continually be in



contact with the sport court. If the player has a foot/feet in contact “only” with the non-playable surface before you beckon for serve, motion for them to move forward, or inform the captain and have them relay the message to the server. This preventive officiating can be used whenever necessary during a match, without penalty. After you authorize the service, if the server steps entirely off the playing surface with one or both feet, it is a service fault.

During the rally, you should concentrate your focus on the ball and the part of the player’s body that is about to contact the ball. You are responsible for determining when a ball is out of play, and (with the help of the line judges) whether a ball lands in bounds or out of bounds. Once you see that a fault has been committed, blow your whistle immediately to end the play. The ‘bread and butter’ signals will be “in,” “out,” “touch,” “service authorization,” and “point.” Signal which team has won the rally and the right to serve next (signal #2), and then signal what fault led you to blow your whistle. If a ball lands on the floor, blow your whistle immediately, even if you still need input from the line judges to decide if the ball landed in or out.

If there is a problem on the court (*e.g.*, a shoe needs to be tied, or a foreign object is on the court), allow the players a short time to fix the issue. If you have not yet blown your whistle for serve, try to make eye contact with the server so they are aware of the delay. (If the server does serve before you beckon, double whistle and signal a replay.) If you have already blown your whistle for serve, and then recognize the problem, you must blow your whistle again to stop play and signal a replay (signal #23). Once the problem is fixed, do another quick scan, and start the play again with another whistle and beckon. Before each rally, you will scan the court, beckon for serve, then end the play and award the ball to the team that won the rally. When the last point of the set is scored, end the rally like normal. Visually confirm the end of the set with your R2 and the scoreboard. Blow your whistle and signal “end of set” (signal #9), then blow your whistle again and release the teams to leave the court and go to their bench, start your watch. Take a well-deserved mental break while supervising the teams between sets. If a deciding set is needed, start your watch, call for captains (or have the R2 do it) and administer the coin toss near the scorer’s table. The key for you is to not look nervous. Show confidence even if you are a little anxious, and blow that whistle loud; look the part and you are questioned less often.

There will be acceptable interruptions during the match. A team is allowed a maximum of 12 substitutions per set. Libero replacements are not counted as substitutions, and neither are exceptional subs. Time-outs are 30 seconds in length, and no warning whistle should be blown. At the end of 30 seconds, the R2 should whistle, and then actively encourage the teams to return to the court. The interval between sets is a maximum of three (3) minutes, but play can resume before three (3) minutes expire if the players, coaches, referees, and support officials are ready. A warning whistle should be



blown when two and a half minutes have passed. This is normally done by the R2, but the R1 should blow their whistle if the R2 does not.

What to Expect – After the Match

When the last point of the match is scored, signal end of set, and then blow your whistle again to direct them to the net so they can shake hands (or they choose to stand at the attack line and wave). Supervise the handshake to discourage unsportsmanlike conduct. As soon as the handshake is completed, head to the scorer's table. If you are working the next match on the court, start your timing device for the next match warm-up, and conduct the captain's meeting as soon as the previous match is finished and captains from both teams are present. Then turn your attention to the scoresheet from the previous match. You will need to keep the scorer at the table just long enough so you can finish reviewing the scoresheet and they can sign it. Make certain that the sheet is filled out both completely and correctly. Have the scorer fix any incorrect or omitted portions. It is the R1's responsibility to make certain that the correct winning and losing teams are listed for each set. Once the scoresheet is completed to your satisfaction, sign the sheet in the designated box and deliver it to the tournament desk, court manager, or report the outcome at a computer terminal or on your cell phone (whichever is used at the tournament). While you turn in the scoresheet have your R2 prepare for the upcoming match and time the warm-ups.

What to Expect – When You Are Not Working a Match

At most tournaments, there will be periods during the day where you do not have an assignment. This is your opportunity to relax, grab a snack, and get off your feet for a bit. For food at most tournaments, you will typically be on your own. Some of the facilities have snack bars, but others do not have any food available onsite. You will not have much time to run out and grab fast food, so it is a good idea to pack some nutritious snacks. Either way, be aware of the facility's rules – if there is a “no outside food or drink” sign, do not walk right past the snack bar with your homemade sandwich. Be discreet! Sometimes, a work team will not be able to provide enough people to officiate a match. In this case, a referee on their break may be asked to help. If nobody volunteers, the head referee will assign officials to cover the match. Please do not complain about the extra work – the head referee is very aware that you would rather be eating or relaxing during your match off, but they have been put in an unpleasant position and need your help. You may or may not be paid for your work, depending on the circumstances. Keep in mind, the officials (head referee, court managers, officials, and work teams) may be called to help keep the tournament running; be a part of the solution and get everyone out of the gym on time.



What to Expect – Tournament Format and Administration

Most of the tournaments in the Lone Star Region that use paid referees are run in a similar manner. Tournaments can be either one-day, two-day or three-day events. One-day tournaments can be on Saturday or Sunday. The normal format for one-day tournaments typically is some form of pool play, and sometimes followed by single-elimination bracket play. Pool play will normally have four teams playing a round-robin format (six matches per pool), and matches will usually be two sets to 25, sometimes with no deciding set if the teams split the first two sets, but depending upon the tournament structure they can play a deciding set. Sometimes pools will have three teams. Matches in those pools will usually be three sets to 25, regardless of the outcome of the first two sets. Bracket play will be normal best-of-3 matches, first two sets to 25, third set (if necessary) to 15. Two-day and three-day tournaments will have two “waves” on the first day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each wave has different teams playing, often from different age groups. The first day will be all pool play, generally the same format as pool play for one-day tournaments. The second day will be mostly bracket play, although occasionally there may be pools as well and certainly if it is a three-day tournament. At a fully staffed tournament, you will work two or three matches in a row on the same court then have some time off before working again. Your break might not be very long if the court you leave is running behind and the court you’re going to is ahead of schedule. This is one reason why it is very important to keep your court running efficiently, so you do not inconvenience the referees who are following you later in the day. Your schedule might change during the course of the day, so be flexible. If you know you will need to leave a tournament site early, those arrangements should be made with the assigner and head referee before you arrive at the site. Requests for early departure will be granted at the head referee’s discretion and only if there are enough officials to cover the remaining matches. Do NOT arrive at a site and ask the head referee if you can leave early that day – they likely will not be able to accommodate you. The key for you is to be flexible and be prepared to work as assigned and agreed.

Signing a Referee Agreement as a LSR Independent Contractor

The Referee Agreement spells out responsibilities for you as an Independent Contractor and responsibilities of the Tournament Host, who pays you for your work at their event. The Lone Star Region does not pay you for your officiating. Be sure that you return this form to the event head referee/scheduler so your assignments will not be



delayed. A completed form is needed for every tournament (unless waived). **see the LSR Referee Agreement in attachment #1.

Defining Moments - They Did Not Teach You About at Your Clinic

It happens to all of us and unless we are ready and know what to do—we look confused and underprepared. Most of the time things go well.....until they don't! Then it becomes a make-or-break situation with you applying crisis management, proper application of rules that you rarely use, personal recovery, and displaying confidence the entire time.

It is how you handle these defining moments that make the difference with participants. Keep in mind, during your season it is highly probable that you will have at least one or more defining moments.

During the season you will spend most of your time whistling, signaling for serve/touch/in/out/team to serve, looking at the second referee/LJs/court environment, and processing information needed to make the match fair, complete, and professional. No problem you say, I do that all the time—correct, until the wheels fall off. In routine matches you will need to display higher-level judgment, communications, pre-match activities, mechanics, bench control, presence courtside, and have the participants trust in your abilities. In defining moments, you have a problem, and you are in charge of fixing it. Here are the topics:

Trouble Courtside

1At one tournament two dads got into a fist fight at a “13 and under” girls volleyball match. **2**At a national qualifier, Head Referees were called to the court with an Arbitrator because parents on one team were yelling racial slurs at the other team while they served. **3**At a very large tournament a Head Referee was asked to come to a court with police, because a dad was in the middle of the court physically threatening the second referee (coach) over ‘net’ calls. Some might say this is rare, and they are right; not to worry about it until it happens on your court, but when it happens--are you ready?

Recommendation #1: when you get to a tournament, find out who the Head Referee, and/or Court Manager is—put their phone numbers into your cell phone; do not be scrambling for a phone number when trouble comes your way. These people are your lifeline for problems that are beginning to stir courtside (parents, fans, other players, and yep, people off the street) and you need someone to watch, listen, and who can act with authority if something breaks loose. Your responsibility per rule is to referee the game, not take care of problems courtside; so, you do not give parents sanctions, you cannot tell them to shut up, and you cannot tell them to leave, or it becomes a problem for you as well. So, what do you do—



Recommendation #2: you call in the troops! If you have a parent problem, someone pulling on your pants during play, distracting arguments in the stands, obscene/racial/sexual language courtside.....get a 'responsible person' from the scorer's table to go to the Championship Desk or control area (head referee, tournament director, or court manager) and get them to your court (the first referee might communicate it like this—"Ms. Second Referee, you may have noticed that we have people arguing and pushing each other on the sideline, I want a responsible player at the scorer's table to go and bring the Court Manager here now; I'll wait for you to send them for the Manager and then I will start the match again"). The Head Referee or Court Manager will not often come alone, but with help, and they may want to talk to the first or second referee when they get there, unless your instructions are to 'come and watch at my court.' When you send someone to get an Arbitrator, please include a request for Security or Police, if the situation includes violence or appears to look like it will become violent. That is your job, get someone else there to take care of the problem off the court. You make 400-500 judgment calls a set in volleyball, all important, and you need to use good judgment when you get "the troops", because it is a judgment call that will reflect on you just as negatively (if not done right) as a wrong decision at match point giving the win to the wrong team.

Your match is going great, you are starting to have false assumptions that you are having a perfect match, and then things start to go bad. If someone in the stands, or around your court, is disrupting your match to the point that it is affecting play...stop the match. In this scenario you get off the stand, send for help, and then explain (as needed) to the coaches that you are delaying the match until the disruption is resolved.

Recommendation #3: You should always error on the side of safety! To continue playing when a disruption is going on right at your court will only lead to a protest. Ask for forgiveness later if it turns out to be nothing, and don't send for help if someone just sneezes (if you follow my drift).

Sanctions

USAV Rule 20.1.1 Participants must know the "Official Volleyball Rules" and abide by them. Clear enough, but what if participants don't do that? Sanctions come in two basic forms, delay, and conduct. Apply the correct sanction(s), in the correct sequence, and you will be respected.

A delay sanction can be a warning or a penalty, and there can be multiple penalties during the same match for delay. Any second or subsequent delay during a match is a penalty point. All delays sanctions are recorded and remain in effect for the entire match. For example, delays might include:

- not coming out of a time-out after the whistle that ends the time-out and a verbal warning from the second referee,



- attempting to enter as a substitution with warm-ups on,
- requesting a third time-out [**whistled**],
- sub enters the substitution zone [13th substitution] [**whistled**]
- a coach repeatedly questioning the second referee about team details (i.e., “again, how many subs have I used” or “lineup check”) to slow down the match,
- stopping play because a player’s equipment (i.e., headband) falls to the floor and is a safety issue requiring a replay,
- a player on the team that loses the point rolls the volleyball out of bounds, past the server, and down three courts away, or
- any action that delays the match, slows the timing of the match, or is a deliberate action to change the tempo of the match.

As part of the art of officiating volleyball, we almost always give a verbal warning first in case the team is not aware that their actions can require a yellow or red card sanction. We do not give a verbal warning when there is a delay of sub, upon request of additional subs or time-outs, or stopping play for player’s equipment. In other examples above, and in many other cases, you must use your judgment about verbal or yellow card warnings. In one match Team A, slowly, very slowly, rolled the ball under the net (and out of bounds) toward Team B who won the rally. The captain for Team A was called over to the first referee and given a team verbal warning not to delay. On a subsequent play Team B wins the rally and Team A rolls the ball so slowly towards Team B’s side of the court that a Team B player had to run under the net to retrieve it to continue play. Play was stopped and a yellow card warning was given to Team A for delay. That stopped the delay tactic, as Team B would be awarded a penalty point on any future delays during the match. You have seen this type of delaying action in matches before! Do not let it happen! For a team delay, stay calm, call the captain over and explain the reason for the card, then be sure the second referee explains it to the coach, and finally that it is recorded properly on the scoresheet. When issuing a sanction (or yellow card), remember that under USAV regulations a player is called to the referee stand by the first referee, raises their hand to acknowledge that they are getting a card, and then returns to play after the first referee shows the card (unless it is an expulsion or disqualification).

Recommendation 1: after a sanction, resume play immediately to get things going, re-establish your tempo, and eliminate any protest situation.

Conduct sanctions are applied for misconduct, and are often called “behavior” sanctions, assessed to anyone on the court or the bench. Conduct sanctions are; warning, penalty, expulsion, and disqualification. Per rule, a warning can be given for minor misconduct (in two stages: verbal warning, and issue of a yellow card warning—but a yellow card warning does not necessarily require a verbal warning first), as a “symbol” that



a team member is approaching the sanction level during a match. Yellow card warnings are assessed to individuals but are in force for the entire team for the entire match. Any conduct that implies minor disrespect to the officials, other players, or fans, needs a warning. Conduct that is rude, offensive, or aggressive, requires a sanction. The penalty (red card) is your first line of communication to a team member that they have crossed the line and they need to stop doing what they are doing; opponents get a point. The expulsion (red/yellow cards together) is any second red card [to same player/coach] or conduct that is less than aggressive but requires more than a penalty. The disqualification (red and yellow cards apart in two hands) is for any second expulsion [to same player/coach], or conduct that is a physical attack, or threatening/aggressive behavior. Disqualifications are rare and do not happen often; but when a player throws a chair at your second referee for making a net fault call, act quickly and without any hesitation. In the event you have a player get an expulsion, they stay on the bench but cannot continue their behavior; in the event you have another team member get an expulsion, they must leave the playing area, bench and warm-up area for that set. If a team member gets disqualified, they must leave the spectator area (out of site/out of sound) for the match. On expulsion and disqualification, get someone from championship (Court Manager or Head Referee) to your court to monitor the behavior—you calmly continue with the match. When a team member gets an expulsion or disqualification, they have about one minute to leave (or your interpretation of a reasonable amount of time—but be ready to defend it), and after the match then report all expulsions and disqualifications to the Head Referee or Tournament Director. At the conclusion of the tournament notify the LSR Referee Chair.

Recommendation 2: Even though the individual player is called to the stand to receive a card, it is recommended that you also explain the reason for the card to the team captain. Be sure the second referee records the cards properly and informs the coach why the card was given and to whom.

If you have a co-official that admits that they do not give sanctions, yellow cards, or disqualify anyone—then you need to have a strong, serious pre-match discussion because it is part of the game and requires you to take action. It is the opinion of many that referees underutilize the warning and are afraid to give sanctions because it makes them appear to have failed in their duties. This is wrong thinking, and it may be a coaching technique that has nothing to do with the officials! In a minor instance where a coach disagrees with a call, then ok, play on; if a coach makes a minor statement about ‘that ball was touched,’ then ok, play on; but if a coach hints of being disrespectful, discourteous, rude, ill-mannered, otherwise tries to influence calls or intimidate officials or opponents, or other unsporting behavior, they must at the least get a yellow card—and, if that behavior does not stop immediately go to the red card to get their attention.



Court and Match Delays

Delays during the match are a normal part of the game, whether it is getting the Libero to go onto the court before the match begins, having the team come out of a time-out faster, answering a coach's question quickly, getting subs to stay off the SportCourt, making sure the scorer has the subs entered correctly, or many other possibilities. Use your judgment wisely and help these small delays get corrected through good communication skills, a quick little double whistle, or a few words of pressing encouragement. On these "processing the match" delays, do not be in a hurry to start requesting team delay warnings and penalties; use your skill as a mediator and communicator to take care of these issues (this is an excellent opportunity to connect with a coach instead of alienating a coach).

Some other delays will take more refined and quick judgment, and in these cases the outcome can impact your rating score. When an outside ball rolls onto a court in the middle of a rally, when a player loses their shoe during play, when a player has an injury that is bad enough that they cannot continue playing, or when a small child decides to run onto a live court with reckless abandonment, you will have to make a decision. Always, I mean always, err on the side of caution and safety if there is even a slight chance of someone getting hurt or hurt worse. In the case of player equipment falling to the floor of a live match, remember USAV requires a replay, "**delay warning**", and then resumption of play (unlike NFHS and NCAA).

Some other delays will try your patience, but you can't do anything about it. For example, your scorer at the match is taking forever to record substitutions—be patient. It is a wonderful rainy day at the tournament, and you are on court #78 with a drip from the ceiling onto the right back area on Team B's side of the your court—be patient, call housekeeping (through a Head Referee if needed), give a towel to a parent/kid and ask them to wipe it up every dead ball if it is only a drip, and continuously evaluate the safety of the court. A bird or bat flies over your court and poops (yes, I've seen both) or you have blood on the court—be patient, contact tournament staff and they will call the custodian(s), and ask them to use a cleansing agent. It may be necessary to get off the stand to facilitate these delays, but this just shows that you know what to do and take charge of the situation. Sometimes a match will have to be delayed because the pool is behind, or you will have to wait for a team to come from another court because of 'cross bracket' play—be patient, explain to the everyone that the delay is beyond your control and that you will get it going as quickly as possible. Never let them see you sweat!

For a serious injury delay, be aware of the safety, medical and legality risks, and proceed very carefully. Any injury that requires play to stop needs your serious evaluation in terms of the match proceeding. If a player goes down to the floor with an injury, and does not 'pop' right back up, immediately stop play with a triple whistle (my preference) and have the second referee approach the injured player while starting to time an injury



evaluation period; at this point if the player does not get up soon then call the coach/team trainer onto the court. In the most serious of injuries (i.e., broken bone, not responsive, back or neck injury, obvious high level of pain) you call for a tournament trainer/EMT to come to your court immediately--by identifying a responsible person at your court to go get the trainer, referees stay at the court.

Recommendation #1: always know where the trainers (if any) are located somewhere in the gym. In the most serious injury situations, you will be expected to help facilitate the medical access and evacuation process (while staying clear of making any medical decision). Here is what I mean—most convention center tournaments have EMS vehicles on stand-by within a few blocks of the convention center, and whether EMS comes onto your court by truck, gurney, stretcher, or medical trolley cart (I’ve seen all of them used) you will need to be off the stand and provide access (move chairs, parents and players out of the way) and evacuation right-of-way (stop foot traffic around your court) prior to EMS personnel rushing in to take care of a seriously injured player. Do not rush to get the match started again until the player has absolutely been taken care of, assisted by trainers or EMS, removed from the court, and then give the concerned coach a few seconds to decide on what to do next. This is where referees should shine, we help take care of those that are hurt, and we facilitate their careful evacuation as needed.

At the USAV Open Championships in Holyoke, MA, all the lights went out and we were suddenly playing in total darkness. At the Lone Star Qualifier in Dallas, TX, one year we were told to evacuate everyone immediately to the basement parking lot because a tornado was looming “down the street.” At the Open Championships in Phoenix, AZ, on a court near the wall, a larger-than-average player hit a water barrel holding up the net between courts and overturned it—it is amazing what 480 pounds or 55 gallons of water will do after it hits that wall and the seemingly Tsunami-type wave comes back immediately upon the court (you get the visual). Sometimes (Holyoke) the match cannot be moved, sometimes (Dallas) you are going to be delayed an hour, and sometimes (Phoenix) it takes two hours to take up a court, dry it, and then resume play. How you handle these delays caused by accident, utility failure, and other “acts of God” will tell the rater who you are. Be patient, quietly take charge, calm people down, see that everyone is safe, follow instructions if announced, and only resume play when everything is clearly ready for secure play. When a delay causes a prolonged interruption, the Championship Committee or Tournament Director, or if no one else, the Head Referee, will decide what to do about the delay (see USAV Rule 17.3).

Recommendation #2: if play on your court is stopped, start timing it because you are in-charge of monitoring the conditions of the match continuing. Be sure the score sheet reflects your notes. (i.e., REMARKS: Set 2 delayed 32 minutes due to injury player #8 team B).



Protests

A protest can be lodged by the coach or game captain for all age levels. It must be lodged prior to the next service, within 60 seconds after the set ends, or within 60 seconds at the end of the match. If a protest is lodged, follow these basic guidelines to make sure you handle it properly:

- Determine if a protest is acceptable or not (judgment call is “not” acceptable)
- If before match play; the second referee goes to Championship to get the Head Official or Tournament Director
- If after play begins; you must stop play, do not attempt to continue play in order to refuse a protest
- **NEW 2023-24:** If it is determined that a coach is attempting to protest a judgment call, the R1 must indicate this to the coach. The R1 will also indicate to the coach that if the protest committee agrees that it is a judgment call, a RED CARD (penalty) sanction will be administered to the coach. The game will continue immediately.
- First Referee gets off the stand if protest is acceptable and sends a “responsible person” (player at the table, officiating team coach near the table, or another referee sitting nearby) to Championship to get the appropriate person for a protest.
- Very Important – the first referee and second referee immediately walk back out onto the court and stand separated with the first referee nearer the stand and the second referee nearer the table but on the court (both facing the table), and my preference is that they are on opposite sides of the net.
- Referees continue to monitor activities on the court and do not discuss the protest with other officials, coaches, players, fans or among themselves.
- During this wait, prepare yourself to answer questions from the Head Referee or Protest Committee upon their arrival: who is protesting, what happened, what sequence of events took place that led to your decision, who was involved, and so on -- be honest and record total time needed for protest on scoresheet after conclusion of the process.

When the Head Referee or Protest Committee arrives, they will quickly interview referees (maybe separately), captains (most of time with coaches), possibly the Scorer or other work team members. They will then take a moment to make a decision and then inform referees and captains of the decision. Once discussion of the decision is finished, start the match again as soon as the court is clear, and players are ready.

What is protestable?

- Misinterpretation of a rule
- Failure of referee to apply the correct rule to a situation



- Failure of referee to give the correct sanction/penalty for a fault or behavior
- Scoring error

A misinterpretation of a rule or failure to apply the correct rule is the most common protest. Remember, **rule=protestable, judgment=not protestable**. Four hits or not=not protestable; uniforms are illegal or non-compliant=not protestable; or it was not a centerline fault=not protestable. The “failure to give the correct sanction” is protestable only if the referee is giving the wrong sanction (i.e., the referee gives the coach a delay warning for behavior), and it is not protestable if the referee gives a yellow card warning for behavior and then judges that a red card penalty is required next. Review USAV Casebook 5.06.

Remember at a tournament if you think for a second that a team might be in an illegal uniform, call for a Head Referee or Court Manager to help make the decision at your court. If no Head Referee is there, you must make the decision. However, the opposing team cannot protest the legality of the uniform.

Things to remember—

- It is not an implication of your ineptness if a protest is lodged, it is just a process of the game, legal and a correct procedure
- You must recover after a protest; the game continues and so must you
- If you want further clarification regarding a protest, see the Head Referee after the match

Dealing with Coaches

Part of any successful match for the first referee is building a relationship with your partner, other members of the officiating team, coaches, and players. Without good communications, and building a little rapport, referees do not enjoy the trust nor project integrity to the coaches. It is important that the referees make every effort in pre-match to use good time management, appear self-assured, take care of details, and ‘orchestrate’ activities that lead up to match time that makes the players, coaches, and officiating team confident in your abilities. For coaches this may begin with a timely and very brief visit for you to introduce yourself and to see if there are questions. Be mindful that the participants, coaches, and others will be watching to see how you handle yourself before the match ever begins.

As the match begins the communications switch to the second referee as the primary contact for the coaches. Critical to this task of working with the coaches is being aware of requests from the bench, scanning to be alert of what is happening in your environment, and anticipating the needs of the team so you can react in a timely manner. You must communicate with the coaches!



Recommendation #1: You must approach and engage the coach at the attack line every time they are asking a question, trying to communicate with the scorer, attempting to talk to the first referee, or reacting to a referee decision by walking quickly to the court or toward you as second referee. It is how you communicate and ‘handle’ coaches in these ‘defining moments’ that will classify you as a second referee.

There are things you do not do: do not argue with coaches, do not undermine your first referee or other officiating staff, do not ignore the coach, do not escalate the situation, do not minimize the coaches’ statements, do not be overt in your responses, and do not try to justify the situation with presumptive wording. People will watch carefully how you approach, engage and answer questions/statements from coaches. Here are a few basics you need to practice when dealing with coaches: 1) always approach them at the attack line and do not allow them to approach you inside the substitution zone (direct them back beyond the attack line as needed), 2) always approach them in a non-defensive manner and posture (perhaps turned sideways slightly, looking right at them, and putting your hands behind you), 3) listen every time to what they have to say first, 4) answer by using reflective statements and then verbiage from the USAV Rule Book (i.e., “you feel it was an outstanding athletic play when your setter reached over the net and brought the ball back to her side of the court, but by rule she cannot make a play outside of her playing space by penetrating into the opponents’ court”), and 5) always direct the conversation toward you as second referee and away from the first referee, scorer or line judge.

When a coach is upset, frustrated, or does not understand the call, you have an excellent opportunity to clarify in a brief moment what is going on. Do this judiciously and keep the match going. Approach, listen, engage, and continue the match—if this does not happen you may have to request a warning or sanction from the first referee. There are times when eventually no response is appropriate because this coach has to have the last word. Coaches may be upset because they do not have enough information to correct an error, so help them through preventive officiating and corrective measures to ensure they understand the problem (i.e., “yes I understand you are now using a left-side stack, but with your center front #2 quickly pulling back over here and your center back #12 moving forward over there they created a positional fault”).

Recommendation #2: There are no perfect ‘one-liners’ that will solve every issue with a coach. Indeed, a limited number of coaches are really trying to get a yellow card to somehow motivate their team. Here are a few statements I have heard that worked from time-to-time during a ‘defining moment:’

“We know you disagree with the call, but that is the first referee’s judgment, and we now have to continue the match.”



“Yes, that was a heck of an effort, but the line judge saw part of the ball touch the floor and signaled immediately.”

“The first referee has been consistent with ball handling calls and there may be a slight advantage to the offense, but what will you do as a great coach to make use of that?”

“Coach there has been several times now when one of your assistant coaches has complained and stood signaling with two fingers regarding potential doubles. That needs to stop now.”

“Ugly is not always illegal...sometimes it is just ugly.”

“No, this is not BBQ volleyball, both great teams are being allowed the same flexibility in playing the ball.”

“Coach I understand you are not talking to me as R2, but no one else is listening!”

“For safety, and so we can see our officiating team, could you move a little further back from the side of the court during play?”

“Thanks for your input, let’s leave it at that.”

Pre-Match

The players and coaches are waiting on your court, you arrive and look around, and then sit at the scorer’s table only to use your cell phone, your partner arrives and heads for the bathroom, you finally look at your watch and decide it is time to flip a coin, your officiating team is still huddled on the sideline, your partner gets back to your court but you two never talk, you don’t see the antennas are crooked, and finally, your match starts five minutes late. How did you do? In this situation you will be defined by your pre-match activities and procedures, so the ‘defining moment’ for you may be before the first serve is ever whistled.

Too many nets are nowhere close to being taut. If you feel the net is loose, correct it for the sake of the game. Don’t just ignore it. Remember, antennas should be above the outer edge of the sideline and not in the middle or on the inner edge. Benches should be moved (if needed) to a point at least a few inches beyond the attack line. The scorer’s table should be off the sport court as this is a playable area for the players. Ensure that you scout your entire court to make sure there are no bags or spectators on the Sport Court as this is a playable area.

The impression the coaches, players, and the fans have of you will define in part how well you are judged as successful as a referee. Studies in body language have shown that you have seven seconds to make a positive impression with someone upon first meeting. So, what does this tell you about how you should walk onto the court, how you start to work at the scorer’s table, and how you should quickly proceed in making sure everything/everyone is ready for play? If impressions can be positive, neutral, or negative, then you want participants to have a positive impression of you during pre-match.



Recommendation #1: Establish a positive predisposition on your court by taking care of all the details required (and beyond) in pre-match; take care of pre-match details and the coaches may cut you some slack. Do not take care of pre-match details and the coaches may feel you do not know what you are supposed to do.

The difference between success and failure is often our own mental predisposition, and it has been proven over and over that a positive predisposition more often leads to success. The importance of positive communications with your partner and officiating crew is an important advantage that plays to the success of the match. In Learning Theory, it is a way of shaping a positive experience to fit into an individual's comfort zone of responding to the surrounding environment. So, how do you establish this positive predisposition with yourself, your partner, and participants? Here are a few key points that should be your 'standard' in pre-match:

1. Arrive on time, dressed professionally
2. Use good time-management
3. Talk with scorer, assistant scorer, and line judges. Never "assume" that they know their duties.
4. Briefly introduce yourself to the coaches at an appropriate moment
5. Discuss with your partner a) back-row situations, b) warnings and sanctions, c) discrete assistance, d) what beams above your court are in/out, 3) special situations
6. Regardless of the match, quickly check the ball, net and antennas (even if you do not use equipment)
7. Appear confident and take charge of things without looking overt about it
8. Get a Head Referee or Court Manager to your court early if there appears to be a problem with uniforms
9. Quickly confirm with everyone that they are ready before approaching the referee stand

Recommendation #2: Make it apparent that you completed your pre-match activities. This confirms to all that are watching that you know what you are doing.

Recommendation #3: Do not look/stare at the coaches after a close call! Take care of the details and it will help in the progress of the match, which will take care of you.

Ball Handling and Attack Faults

Some of the most difficult skills to master for volleyball officials are correctly and consistently applying the rules related to ball handling and attack faults. There are two



types of ball handling violations identified in the USAV Rule Book – a “catch” and a “double contact,” and then there are attack faults (attack and block) involving back row players.

Catch or Throw

Volleyball is unique amongst sports in that the ball must rebound off the participants while remaining aloft. Apart from the service action, players may not hold or unduly control the ball, as this would provide them with a distinct advantage. Therefore, catching or throwing the ball is not permitted. A catch is commonly referred to as a “lift” by participants and spectators. “Potential” violations of this rule can happen in many ways:

- An open hand beneath the ball catches or throws it
- A setter “deep dishes” (brings the ball down slowly) a set and holds on too long
- A player throws the ball over the net from behind or the side of their body
- A player “wipes” the ball off the block after pushing the ball into the block
- The ball comes to rest between the player and the net

When determining if a contact violates the “catch” rule, asking yourself the following questions will help in your judgment: did the player over-control the ball or did the ball completely come to rest? If the answer is yes to either question, the likelihood of a ball handling violation is much higher. Note that the words “roll”, “stick”, “ugly”, and “sound” do not appear in the rules, and therefore do not factor into our decision to call this fault. Here are some examples of common plays:

- A ball hits a passer in the shoulder or chest, or on the inside of the elbows. The ball will often seem to “stick” on the player for a moment and may not rebound as far as a normal contact would. Your tendency might be to call a violation due to the unusual nature of the contact, but ask yourself the question as it is presented in the rules – was the ball caught or thrown? Is the player exerting extra control over the ball? The answer to both questions is clearly “no.” In fact, the player exhibits a complete lack of control over the ball in these examples. A catch should not be called on these contacts.
- A team member attempts to play a served or attacked ball with an overhand setting action but misplays it and the ball goes through their hands and flies backwards. The ball might have been contacted multiple times, but it was definitely not caught or thrown. This play may be ugly, but it is not a violation as defined in the rules.
- A player squats low to the floor to save a ball near the net. If the player uses an open hand to lift the ball, it is possible that a violation has occurred. Otherwise, do not assume from the player’s awkward positioning that all contacts like this will be illegal – judge only the part of the body contacting the ball. A one-handed play, whether it is a dig, set, or tip, should be judged using the same guidelines as all other



contacts. The mere act of playing a ball with only one hand or with an open hand does not automatically make the contact illegal.

Double Contact

On the second and third team contacts, a player may not contact the ball more than once while making a play on the ball. Double contact violations are most commonly seen during the act of setting but can occur in other situations. We **do not** use spin, sound, body position, or any other factor to influence our decision – only whether or not we actually see the player contact the ball multiple times. So, it is critical to watch the contact to determine a violation. Let's examine some contacts that should not be whistled as violations of the double contact rule:

- A team member attempts to play a served or attacked ball with an overhand setting action but misplays it and the ball contacts her hands multiple times, then spins wildly as it comes out. On all first team contacts (the first time a team touches the ball after it crosses the net, not including the block), a player may contact the ball multiple times, so long as the ball is not caught or thrown. These plays will be very ugly – and you will be tempted to blow your whistle because something just does not seem right – but rest assured these contacts are allowed according to the rules.
- A team member attempts to play a served or attacked ball, and it contacts her forearms, then her shoulder. While this is clearly two contacts, we must allow play to continue, since the double contact occurred on the first team hit. These types of contacts are allowable as long as they are during a single attempt to play the ball. If a ball were to contact the player's forearms, then travel up in the air and hit the player's shoulder on the way down, the contacts would be considered successive attempts, and would be whistled as a double contact.

Becoming a good judge of ball handling can only occur with experience. Watch other officials whom you trust as they work a match and see if you would have made the same calls as them. As you begin to have questions about how to interpret these rules ask your mentor, an evaluator/rater, or your head referee for clarification.

Back-Row Faults

A player who starts a rally in one of the three back-row positions has some restrictions. They may not block a ball and cannot be blocking next to a front-row player who successfully blocks a ball (known as a "collective block"). If they attack the ball while it is entirely above the height of the net, they must have last contacted the floor completely behind the 3-meter line. One of the rules that coaches expect all referees to apply consistently is the back-row rule, particularly as it relates to the setter. You must be aware



when a setter starts the rally in the back row, because a violation has been committed if any of the following things happen:

- The back row setter contacts a ball while it is completely above the height of the net and: a) the next contact is a legal contact by an opposing player; or b) the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net (Back Row Attack)
- The back row setter has a part of her body above the height of the net and an opponent causes the ball to touch her (Back Row Block)

These rules apply to all back-row players, but the situation occurs most frequently when the setter is involved. You **MUST** blow your whistle and make a ruling – play cannot continue if a back-row player touches a ball that is completely above the height of the net immediately before or after it contacts an opponent. The signals are: “attack fault” (signal #21, in the case of the first bullet above), “blocking fault” (signal #12, in the case of the second bullet), or “reaching beyond the net” (signal #20) if the opponent reaches over the net and interferes with the playing action.

Rules Review

The basic rules of the game of volleyball are the same, but the intricacies of the rules can differ depending on the organization. To ensure that you know the differences between USAV rules and rules used in schools (NFHS and NCAA), use the comparison sheets located at: https://pavo.org/Portals/0/docs/2023_RuleComparison_NCAA-NFHS-USAV_FINAL.pdf

Here are some rules that you will need to remember when working USAV events in the Lone Star Region.

Jewelry & Headwear

Hair adornments of any kind are allowed. This includes plastic or metal barrettes and bobby pins. Headbands of all materials, including hard plastic and metal, are also legal. A head covering made from cloth or soft, non-abrasive fabric may be worn. Hats and caps are **not** allowed. All jewelry is approved for juniors and adults unless it creates a safety issue. No long necklaces, necklaces with big medallions, long earrings, or large loop earrings may be worn...including in the nose. Plastic or nylon spacers (often worn in the ear or nose to keep a piercing hole from closing) are allowed.

The Libero

Despite the unusual name, the Libero position has gained an increasingly important role since its introduction. (*Libero* is Italian for “free”, since they can freely replace any backrow player, and can be pronounced either *LEE-buh-row* or *luh-BEARoh*.) The Libero is



restricted to playing in the three back-row positions. When their position rotates to the front row, they must be replaced by the regular team member in that position. Because the Libero is intended to be a serve-receive and defensive specialist, and because they may enter the game freely, there are several restrictions on their playing actions. First, the Libero may not block or attempt to block, they may not complete an attack from anywhere on the court if the ball is entirely above the height of the net, and if a Libero is touching the court on or in front of the 3-meter line (and they play the ball using overhand finger action), the next contact by their teammate may not be an attack while the ball is completely above the height of the net. The Libero may serve in only one position during a set. If a team has 2 liberos, both liberos must serve in the same position during a set. Up to two Liberos are allowed to be listed on the roster and play, but only one Libero can be on the court at one time.

External Interference

The most frequent type of external interference is a ball rolling onto the court during play. If the ball presents a distraction to the players, interferes with play, or poses a safety hazard, the rally should be stopped and replayed. However, not all balls that enter the court will necessitate a replay. If the play is occurring near the net, and an errant ball rolls across the back of the court away from the play, it is not necessary to stop the rally. Other types of interference can also require a replay. If a player is chasing a ball and the line judge or R2 prevents that player from making a play, the rally should be replayed. In your judgment, the player must have a legitimate play on the ball for a replay to be awarded.

Facility Ground Rules

Each facility will have some unique ground rules that need to be applied during your match. If you have any questions about the specific circumstances that apply to your court, ask your head referee or court manager. Even with the wide variety of facilities, there are some ground rules that will be common across all venues:

- **Divider Nets**

The ball is out of play if it contacts a divider net around a court. If a player is preparing to play a ball falling near a divider net, only that player can move the net before the ball is played. If one player or fan moves a divider net so a different player can contact the ball, the ball is ruled out of play (signal #15). This includes when a player is attempting to serve...no one can hold a net for a player to serve.



- **Adjacent Courts**

A player may not step on or over the boundary lines of another court at any time. If they do so, the ball is ruled out of play (signal #15). This is true even if the player has already contacted the ball and their momentum carries them into the adjacent court. The area around an adjacent court, such as the free zone and service zone, is considered a playable area. The only exception to the adjacent court rule is if play for the day has already finished on an adjacent court, and no other matches are scheduled on that court. If both captains are informed during the captains' meeting, the court may be considered a playable area. The adjacent court ruling may not change during a match – if the match starts with the adjacent court being considered out of play, it must remain that way for the entire match.

Overhead Obstructions

After a team's first or second contact, if the ball touches the ceiling on that team's side of the court, it remains in play, as long as the portion of the ceiling that the ball touched is over the playable area. The next player to touch the ball must also be a member of that team – in other words, if the ball contacts the ceiling and then crosses the net, it is out of play once: a) a player from the other team legally touches it; or b) it completely crosses the vertical plane of the net. If the ball crosses the net and then contacts the ceiling, it is out of play as soon as the ceiling is contacted. If the ball touches the ceiling on either side of the court after a team's third contact, it is ruled out of play immediately. You should not take into account the trajectory of the ball when determining if contact with the ceiling is legal. If a ball is traveling towards a non-playable area (such as a wall or spectator seating), but after it contacts the ceiling, it changes direction and comes back towards the court, the ball is still in play, as long as the portion of the ceiling that the ball touched is over a playable area. This interpretation is commonly misunderstood – the opposing coach will want you to call the ball "out" because it would not have been playable if the overhead obstruction had not been present. Where the trajectory of the ball is important is dealing with obstructions below 15 feet high. The most common example of this situation is a vertical basketball backboard. (Note: if the backboard is above 15 feet, it is considered to be part of the ceiling). If a ball contacts an obstruction below 15 feet, whistle to stop play. If the ball would not have remained in play if the obstruction was not there, call the ball out (signal #15). If the ball would have remained in play, and a player had a legitimate play on the ball, the rally should result in a replay. In pre-match determine what ceiling objects are out on your court. If the ball comes to rest on an overhead obstruction, the rally is replayed. Send your R2 to the tournament desk to get another game ball.

Benches



If a facility has benches, they should be no closer to the centerline than the 3-meter line. Players may stand at the end of the benches but cannot be any closer to the court than the front edge of their bench. If a player attempts to play a ball that is over the bench, they can legally do so if part of their body is touching the playing surface when they contact the ball. Some facilities do not have room for benches. In this case, the players and coaches will typically stand next to or behind the court. Their position may not interfere with the duties of the R2, line judges, or scorers. Coaches are no longer required to stand a minimum of 5'10" from the sideline. This does not mean that they can stand inches away from the sideline.

Replays

In addition to the sections above regarding injuries, interference, and overhead obstructions, there is another situation where a replay may be awarded. If a ball lands near a line, but none of the officials can determine whether the ball landed "in" or "out", the rally can be replayed. This should be a very rare occurrence; it happens most often when the R1 cannot see the ball land because players are in the way and the line judges are also unable to determine where the ball contacted the floor. The line judges are positioned to assist the R1 in making line and antenna calls, but in the absence of a call from the line judges, you as R1 should be prepared to make a ruling. Note that disputed touch calls CANNOT be replayed and there is no video replay. If it cannot be determined with 100% certainty whether or not a ball was touched prior to traveling out of bounds, then no touch is called, and the ball is ruled "out". **NOTE:** If a player from both teams touches the net while playing the ball and the R1 or R2 cannot determine which player contacted the net first, a replay will be given. **NOTE 2:** If one line judge calls a ball "in" and the other line judge calls the ball "out" this would not be a replay. The call would be "out", unless the R1 overrules the call because he/she saw the ball "in".

Line Judge Footwear

To ensure the safety of all players, please see that line judges wear appropriate footwear during competition within the region. Due to the possibility of line judges having to move quickly, flip-flops, fuzzy slippers, and any type of sandals are **not allowed** to be worn by line judges, **unless** there is either a strap on the back of the footwear, or it is fully enclosed around the entire foot. Being barefoot or only wearing socks is not allowed.

Contrasting Jersey Rule

The USAV Rules Commission made a major rule change and the wording of USAV 19.2.a. was revised to read:



“The Libero must wear a jersey that clearly contrasts with, and has a different dominant color from, the jersey of their teammates.”

We are looking forward to updates that will enhance our current understanding, but for right now the following will prevail:

- USAV Rules book rule 4.3 has changed to read; Arabic numbers 1-99, 4-6” uniform numbers must be clearly visible and centered side to side on the front and back of the jersey. Numbers are recommended to be placed on the upper half of the jersey. Numbers may not extend below the player’s waist and may not be tucked into the uniform bottom. The number color **must** contrast with jersey color, uniform design is identical for team but not Libero, etc.. **NOTE: If numbers on the front of the jersey are lowered below the chest area, it is recommended that 6” numbers be used and not 4” to ensure visibility for the referees and scorer.**
- The first referee of the match determines if the Libero uniform clearly contrasts with the rest of the team or not.
- This is a judgment call based upon the ability of the first referee to clearly see the jersey contrast in color with other teammates. Like other judgment calls, the head referee should advise first referees if their ‘calls’ are too strict or too loose.
- That if a team has been legal with rule (USAV 19.2), they are still legal in wearing what they have and there is no need to make new purchases.

Playoff Vocabulary

Volleyball playoff vocabulary can be confusing to the uninitiated! Here are some explanations to keep you from feeling like an outsider.

Qualifier – One of ten or so nation-wide tournaments where teams can qualify for the Junior National Championships. Qualifiers are held from late February through the end of April. Teams must typically finish in the top three or four places at a qualifier to secure a spot in the national tournament. Qualifiers can have as many as 200 teams in an age group competing for just a few bids to Nationals. The nearest qualifier is the Lone Star Classic, which is typically held in Dallas and Houston.

Ranking Tournaments or Power League Tournaments – The most important regular-season tournaments in the region are often power leagues. Teams play in power league tournaments to increase their chance of receiving a high seed at the Regional Bid Tournament.



Regional Bid Tournament – Once all the national qualifying tournaments are finished, the teams that still wish to play at the Junior National Championships have one last opportunity to qualify by placing high at the regional bid tournament. This tournament is usually held around the first of May. Typically, only the top two or three finishers in each age group will receive a bid to Nationals. There are exceptions to this with the 18-age group which plays earlier in the season.

Junior National Championships (formerly the Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships or JO's) – The national championship tournaments (boys and girls) for USAV junior volleyball teams are held in late June and early July each year, and in order to play, teams must earn a bid from a qualifier tournament or receive a bid from their region. For some teams, the major measure of a season's success is whether or not they earn a bid to 'Nationals.'

Cross-Bracket Play – This is used to help determine which teams advance to the championship level of play, and tournament directors also use these playoff matches to determine where teams are ranked in the tournament. In terms of moving a team forward, these are 'win or go home' kind of matches.

Arbiter Pay

Many tournament directors now pay using an on-line system called Arbiter Pay (formerly Ref Pay). Essentially, you set up an online account through Arbiter Pay with a bank in Utah. This is done as it saves time, money and ensures that you get paid. Too many folks move and fail to inform the Head Referee of changes, so their checks are mailed to the wrong address, or the post office somehow misdirects them. Once the tournament is over, this allows the tournament staff to electronically pay you.

To use Arbiter Pay everyone will need to establish an Arbiter Pay account at least 3 days before a tournament (in case of any issues). Referees simply log onto www.arbiterpay.com and complete the necessary forms. Once you have registered on Arbiter Pay you will have an account number and username that you can pass on, and it will be used by the Head Referee to see that you are paid by the tournament host. Do not give out your password, as this keeps your account secure. Your Arbiter Pay account number should be entered in your AES profile. Your Arbiter Pay password should NOT be entered in your AES profile.

Tax Information

As a sports official you are an Independent Contractor (as discussed earlier), and you have certain responsibilities to report income; this should be discussed with your tax preparer, accountant or other professional. More information can be found at this IRS site:



<http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Independent-Contractor-Defined>.

Be prepared to also deduct your business expenses. This will include uniforms, travel and mileage, equipment, meals, hotels, portion of phones used in connection with officiating, and more. It is recommended that you develop a spreadsheet for tax preparation and keep it updated; so, at tax time you are ready to report income and expenses. Be very vigilant about keeping good records on your mileage, and get some advice if you are not sure on how to account for it. You can use the IRS standard mileage rates, and more information on this can be found at:

<http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>

There is also help with IRS per diem rates at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>

Be mindful that USAV and the LSR are not tax accounting specialists, and we provide this information as a way of having you begin the process of deciding with your professional advisor on what to do, record and report with the IRS.

LONE STAR REGION MINIMUM REFEREE PAYMENT

Match	International	National	Jr National	Regional	Provisional	Junior
2 out of 3	\$ 34.00	\$ 34.00	\$ 32.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.00
3 to 25	\$ 51.00	\$ 51.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00
3 out of 5	\$ 56.00	\$ 56.00	\$ 53.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 47.00	\$ 47.00
1 - 25 pt set	\$ 17.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00

Outline of Professionalism Expectations

Appearance

Your appearance, posture, poise on the stand, and so on, tell others if you are a professional or not. The uniform must be clean and not wrinkled, you must be well groomed, you must have all of your equipment, and you must have a demeanor that communicates that you are non-biased and ready to go. What you communicate as you come onto the court makes a great deal of difference. If you go to a tournament in your uniform, it is recommended that you wear something over your shirt to avoid stains. If you wear jewelry and/or use make-up, keep the presentation to a minimum and save the 'bling' for a different event. Remember that in the first few seconds, you will make an impression.



You should not have keys, pens, or cell phones visible from any pockets, and your cell phone must not be attached to your belt.

Behavior

Your behavior and conduct as a referee should be above reproach. This means not only 'acting' right in front of others, but it also means honoring your commitments (such as following through if you say you can work a tournament), not changing assignments without permission, being on time to meetings and matches, and helping the tournament run on time. It also means that you are honest, never misrepresenting your certification or your associations, or make calls that are biased.

Be especially careful in how you communicate with the young adults (ages 10 through 18) that will be attending the events where you are the referee. You hold a position of authority, and no one likes someone who abuses their authority or is overt about being in charge. We often refer to those types of people as 'jerks.' Be the calm, cool personality in the gym or on the court, be the problem solver (not the problem maker), be kindly 'direct' when needed, and present yourself as the one all others can count on for a 'level playing field.' There is no room in our sport of volleyball for harassment, anger, or a superiority complex.

While interacting with players, coaches, tournament staff and fans keep your attitude in check, and politely decline opportunities to discuss the last match with the coach(es), spectators, and non-officials. Try to keep conversations light and without gossip, be polite to tournament staff and do not interfere with tournament decisions. You should always decline to talk to players about anything personal that might lead to any possibility of being accused of something inappropriate. Do not take comments personally, especially after a match where you did not do your best, and particularly remarks from parents, fans, and coaches.

Training

The key is to be a student of the game of volleyball. Invest in yourself through some of the following opportunities:

- Study the USAV rule book, comparison sheets, interpretations, and case book
- Take advantage of camps, ratings and by observing senior officials
- Watch USAV training modules that are in your Sports Engine Academy
- Get feedback from other officials through short debrief sessions after each match; be open and receptive to suggestions
- Attend clinics, meetings and take the exams each season



There is a whole training network set up for you to advance through USAV and it is up to you to use it. Training is a part of being a professional and being a student of the game of volleyball.

Concussion Certification

The State of Texas passed Concussion Training Requirements under the Texas Education Code, Section 38.158, which mandates concussion training for coaches, trainers, oversight teams and health providers. It did not include volleyball officials. **KNOW WHERE YOU ARE**—in some state's concussion certification is required of all officials. There is a free course for certification at <https://nfhslearn.com/courses?searchText=Concussion>, use it.

SafeSport Certification

The Lone Star Region and USAV requires all officials working with juniors to have SafeSport certification before starting to work at any USAV or regional event. To complete SafeSport Certification (there is no charge): Review below.

How to Complete My SafeSport Certification from My SportsEngine Account

If you do not have a membership, you will not see this option.

1. Login at My.SportsEngine.com
2. On the left-hand side of the page, click the **Household** tab.
3. Select the user profile that will be completing their SafeSport certification.
4. On the right side of the page, under the membership, click **View Details**.
5. Click on the name of the membership.
6. Next to *SafeSport Certification*, click **Complete Certification/Training**.
 - NOTE: SafeSport certification button will read based upon the actual credential needed (ex. Complete Core Training)

A screenshot of the "Incomplete Requirements" section in a SportsEngine account. It lists four items: "Background Screening" (REQUIRED) with a "COMPLETE SCREENING" button; "SafeSport Certification - Core" (INCOMPLETE, Started Feb 13, 2020) with a "COMPLETE CORE TRAINING" button; "Proof of Birth" (REQUIRED) with an "UPLOAD" button; and "Sideline Sports Doc Certification" (INCOMPLETE, Started Feb 13, 2020) with a "COMPLETE CERTIFICATION" button.

Requirement	Status	Action
Background Screening	REQUIRED	COMPLETE SCREENING
SafeSport Certification - Core	INCOMPLETE	COMPLETE CORE TRAINING
Proof of Birth	REQUIRED	UPLOAD
Sideline Sports Doc Certification	INCOMPLETE	COMPLETE CERTIFICATION



for SafeSport to be reported to your USAV Sports Engine database file, so please print out a copy of your certification and keep it on hand in case it is needed. SafeSport certification is required to be renewed every season. Be sure you complete all three sections of the course.

2023-25 USAV Rules Commission Rules Changes Summary

USAV 4.3.3.1a: Uniform numbers must be clearly visible and centered side to side on the front and back of the jersey. Numbers are recommended to be placed on the upper half of the jersey. Numbers may not extend below the player's waist and may not be tucked into the uniform bottom.

USAV 5.1.2.1, added: Judgment decisions are not subject to protest. A protest related to a judgment decision may result in a penalty (red card) being assessed to the coach.

USAV 5.2.3.4: During the match, the coach may give instructions to players on the court while standing or walking within the free zone in front of his/her team's bench from the extension of the attack line up to and including the warm-up area, without disturbing or delaying the match. The coach must not obstruct the view of the line judges.

USAV 5.3.1: One assistant coach at a time may stand to give instructions to the players on the court but has no right to intervene in the match. During play, the assistant coach may give these instructions while standing or walking within the free zone in front of his/her team's bench from the extension of the attack line up to and including the warm-up area, without disturbing or delaying the match. The assistant coach must not obstruct the view of the line judges.

New for 14 and under age groups:

New USAV 12.4.4a: Once the serving action is initiated, including an underhand serve, if the server tosses the ball and then catches it or allows it to fall to the floor, this is considered a service tossing error, including a ball that touches the server as it falls.

USAV 12.4.4b: After a service tossing error, the referee must authorize the service again (re-serve) and the server must execute it within the next 8 seconds.

Rule 12.5.1: The players of the serving team must not prevent their opponent, through individual or collective screening, from seeing the service hit and the flight path of the ball. Should either be visible to the receiving team, this is not a screen.

USAV 12.5.2: A player or group of players of the serving team make(s) a screen by waving arms, jumping, or moving sideways, during the execution of the service, or by standing grouped, and in so doing hides both the service hit and the flight path of the ball until the ball reaches the vertical plane of the net.

Rule 14.3: In blocking, the player may place his/her hands and arms beyond the net, provided that this action does not interfere with the opponent's play. Thus, it is not permitted to touch the ball beyond the net before an opponent has executed an attack hit.



Rule 14.6.1: The blocker touches the ball in the OPPONENT’S space before the opponent’s attack hit.

New USAV 19.2d: When two Liberos are used, both Liberos can be in uniforms different from each other and from the rest of the team.

USAV 24.2.7d: During the match, the coach or captain may request verification of the number of team substitutions or time-outs. If incorrect information is provided by the 2nd referee and the team acts directly upon this misinformation resulting in an illegal substitution (per USAV 15.9.1) or an excessive time-out, the referee’s error will be corrected with no penalty or sanction assessed to the team. If an illegal (excessive) substitution does not result, the substitution may still be withdrawn prior to the next serve without sanction or penalty.

SPECTATOR/PARENT CONDUCT GUIDELINES AT USA VOLLEYBALL EVENTS

The following guidelines are intended to encourage positive spectating with experiences in an enthusiastic, supportive environment for athletes, coaches, officials, and fellow spectators.

1. USAV Volleyball and the Lone Star Region have a “**zero tolerance**” policy for unsporting conduct at local, regional, and national events.
2. Harassment, intimidation, or unsporting words or actions directed towards other spectators, match participants, tournament staff, officials, including line judges and scorers, may result in removal from the event. Attendance at future events may also be impacted.
3. A current membership with USA Volleyball is required to participate in any game or game-like activities.
4. Law enforcement, security personnel, and USA Volleyball Event Arbitrators (the “Green Shirts”) play an important role in ensuring a safe, fair environment for our young athletes and should be considered important members of the tournament staff.
5. Generate goodwill and good sportsmanship by being polite and respectful to others attending the event.
6. The Event Director and/or Program Administrator must be notified when any illegal activity is witnessed.
7. Spectator seating around the courts is for the primary use of those watching the match in progress. Spectators may rightfully choose to remain in a seat for an entire match without switching sides of the court.
8. Alcohol may not be consumed courtside at any USA Volleyball Youth/Junior volleyball event.
9. Club directors and coaches have a responsibility to address unsporting conduct, words, or actions, by spectators or parents associated with their club.
10. **HIROS:** Effective for the 2023-24 season, USAV has implemented a new program known as **Harassment Incident Report-Officials & Staff** (aka HIROS).

All referees, head referees, and arbitrators are required to watch before their first LSR event. USAV and LSR have policies in place for addressing unsporting conduct at events. The big takeaway is that we are to investigate the incident immediately, not after the fact.



The game will be stopped and then thoroughly investigated. A HIROS form will be filled out by the USAV staff member and official or arbitrator. The form will be available to anyone at the venue with a hard-card credential or ticket (QR code on the back). The form is sent confidentially to USAV and will be available to all national qualifiers and will be required at all USAV owned events. Below is the link to the HIROS form as well as the QR CODE (waiting for a clean copy of the QR Code from USAV).

<https://fs28.formsite.com/USAVolleyball/HIROS/index.html>

It is mandatory for all LSR officials to watch the Harassment Response and Reporting module in their Academy before working any LSR match. ([*212 Harassment Response and Reporting](#)) (**This link is currently NOT active**). Time to complete the course is approximately 10 minutes.

HIROS – HARASSMENT INCIDENT RESPONSE – OFFICIALS & STAFF

HIROS – statement of purpose

USA Volleyball and our Region are committed to ensuring that all events and programs are conducted in an inclusive and supportive environment free from sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment (verbal or physical) targeting race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, or disability. By empowering our officials and event staff to investigate and remove a spectator or participant if needed, we get closer to our goal that events and programs are conducted in an inclusive and supportive environment free from harassment.

Harassment Incident Response – Officials & Staff

Zero-tolerance initiative: addresses harassment in real-time

Types of harassment covered

- Hate speech
- Physical violence

Specific to harassment at an event

Investigation and consequences are immediate

Harassers are removed and banned for the remainder of the event

Reporting and tracking of incidents

Hate Speech primarily involves the slander of an individual's:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

Physical Violence examples:

- Hitting, pushing, shoving
- Spitting
- Throwing objects



Required training modules for officials.

Event staff encouraged to complete training modules (currently officials' module)

Online form with QR code to submit reports in real-time (printable version also available)

Scripts and sample wording provided for communication to participants and attendees.

Mandatory at USA Volleyball national events including qualifiers

Optional for Regional events

Highly encouraged as it will prepare officials and staff to respond when a situation arises

QR Code for the HIROS Form



SNAPSHOT OF THE HIROS ELECTRONIC REPORT FORM: Not the complete form



Harassment Incident Report - Officials & Staff (HIROS)

USA Volleyball takes reports of harassment seriously. Please complete the report so that appropriate and timely action can be taken.

Reporting Party Information

First Name *

Last Name *

Phone Number *

Email: *

Date of Incident *



Time of Incident:

Location Information

Event Name *

Court:

Enter court number and/or comment

Spectator seating area:

Add comment

Spectator entrance:

Add comment

Athlete entrance:

Add comment

Proposed Language: (Waiting for USAV to confirm)

Any observed or reported harassment directed towards an athlete, coach, official, spectator or other attendee at a USA Volleyball event will be met with zero tolerance. For the purpose of clarification, zero tolerance means harassment incidents will be investigated and appropriate consequences will be imposed.

WARNING! Injury from flying objects incidental to the sport of volleyball may occur. Attend at your own risk. Please pay close attention to your surroundings and be always alert, especially during warmups and active play.



Suggestions from the USAV Rules Commission

Ball handling Guidelines. (Page 16)

In accordance with the spirit of the rules 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: 1) A player running to play the ball or forced to make a very quick action to reach the ball in order to set. 2) A 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. 3) The first team contact may be freely made except if the player catches or throws the ball.

Concussion Guidelines: The Rules Commission recognizes the importance of addressing concussions in youth sports. As such, the commission recommends including Concussion Guidelines be added with Blood Guidelines.

([https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/HEADS UP Youth Sports Officials-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/HEADS_UP_Youth_Sports_Officials-a.pdf)):

How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?

Athletes who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

Signs Observed by Sports Officials, Parents, or Coaches

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.
- Can’t recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

Symptoms Reported by Athletes

- Headache or “pressure” in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not “feeling right,” or “feeling down.”



Prosthesis:

Braces, prosthetic limbs, or other headgear that may cause an injury or give an artificial advantage to the player must not be worn. If a brace, prosthetic limb, or headgear is used, padding, or covering may be necessary. In most circumstances, an athlete wearing a prosthesis should be allowed. A prosthetic limb(s) is permitted; sharp edges may need to be wrapped or padded to ensure safety (USAV 4.5.1).

If you as the referee are unsure about the legality of a prosthesis, contact the head referee or referee chair immediately. We want to do everything possible to allow the athlete to play.

Online and Other Resources

www.lsvolleyball.org

This is the website for the Lone Star Region of USA Volleyball. The site contains information for juniors and parents, adult players, coaches, directors and referees. All of the officials' documentation can be found here, including policies, clinics, and forms. Click on the "Officials Clinics & Info" tab to view information specific to referees. All members can also register at this site using the "Registration" tab.

www.sportsengine.com

The official site for USA Volleyball referee training and education. Log into your SportsEngine account, click on "household", click on the box with your photo/initials. On the next page, click on "view details" in the box and this will take you to your memberships/credentials page. Click on "Credentials" and this will show you your achievements (certifications). At the top right you will see in a blue box (USAV ACADEMY) ...click on this box. Click on THE WHOLE SHEBANG PART 1...you have now entered the area where you will find training courses. You must be a current USAV member to use this site.

www.usavolleyball.org

This is the official website of USA Volleyball, the national governing body for the sport of volleyball in the United States.

www.fivb.org

Federation Internationale de Volleyball, the world governing body for the sport of volleyball.



www.worldparavolley.org

This is the official website of World ParaVolley, the International Federation that governs volleyball for athletes with a physical disability.

<https://paravolleypanam.com>

This is the official website for the Pan America zone under World ParaVolley. See what is happening in the America's zone which includes every country between Canada and Argentina.

www.volleyballmag.com

Volleyball Magazine is simply the best volleyball magazine in the world.

VOLLEYBALL ARCHIVES IN TEXAS

The Archives, History, and Records Committee of the USAV have designated the Perry-Castaneda Library as one of their Official Repositories. Each repository has materials and asks for suggestions on its use. Each repository describes its collection, creates plans for further development, specifies conditions under which its material may be used, and submits periodic reports. The Lone Star Region contains the only repository in the southwest, located at:

Perry-Castaneda Library

The General Libraries

University of Texas at Austin

Austin, TX 78712

[For Information Call: (512) 495-4260]

NOTES

Lone Star Region
Member: USAV
Referee Agreement

Date: _____

Official for the _____ Tournament, Leagues, or Series:

This is my agreement to work at the _____ (tournament, leagues or series), at
_____ (locations), in _____ (city), Texas, on the date(s) of
_____, 20____, as an official. By returning this email to _____ (Head

Referee), I agree (if selected) to work the term listed when I originally applied as an official for this tournament and further, I commit to fulfilling this agreement. I also agree to the following terms:

Independent Contractor. As an official I will be an independent contractor and not an employee or agent of the USAV, the Lone Star Region or the host organization. As such, I am responsible for paying all income, FICA and gross receipts taxes that may accrue as a result of services. I understand there are no fringe benefits, workman's compensation, health insurance, vacation or any other benefits related to working this tournament. As an independent contractor, I perform my work at my own risk and through insurance provided by my USAV membership.

Terms. I will provide timely, officiating services. Under USAV rules/regulations of the game, I will conduct the matches with the safety of the players, members and spectators in mind. Furthermore, I will adhere to all USAV rules/regulations, and I understand that I am required to be a USAV member, that I have a current background check and that I am in good standing in my region.

Pay. The rate of pay will be N-\$____, JN-\$____, R-\$____, P-\$____, JO-\$____ (or "dependent upon the pool of funds"), and hotel accommodations (which will be /will not be provided at a later date by the host), are the same as expressed in the invitation/request. I shall provide my own equipment/uniforms and understand that a standard USAV officials' uniform/patch will be worn.

Miscellaneous. I understand that this agreement will be considered binding; however, the tournament host/head ref may notify me that my services will not be needed in the event that teams are reduced, the tournament is canceled, or other emergency or circumstances occur outside of the host's control. I may withdraw when agreed, or because of illness or emergency. If something in this agreement is not enforceable, I understand the remaining parts will still be valid.

Thank you for working this event, we are grateful that we have officials like you that can contribute to youth sports and volleyball in particular. We look forward to working with you.

By my name, personal email and DOB listed below, I agree as dated above.

_____ signed electronically

_____ email address

___/___/___ Date of Birth

Paid Referee Handbook Request Form

Lone Star Region

Date:	Request by:
Handbook Section:	Page:
Current Language	
Recommended Language	
Summarize your rationale for the change	
For Referee Chair Use Only	
Approval of Recommendation:	Date:
Comments or changes to Recommendation	