



Stonewall Sports National Tournament Official Rulebook:

Indoor Volleyball

(Last Updated: June 16, 2026)

Stonewall Sports is For All

Stonewall Sports is dedicated to creating a community of diverse participants via organized sports and activities that take place in inclusive spaces. We are founded on the pillars of respect, holistic wellness, open-mindedness, and the appreciation of diverse backgrounds.

Our shared responsibility is to bring our community together, empower individuals, and provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment to learn and grow, thus uplifting those who are part of the Stonewall community and beyond.

We believe in uplifting and celebrating all individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community — including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, Two-Spirit, and queer people, among others — and we welcome friends and allies into these spaces with open arms.

In pursuit of these values, we encourage each of our participating teams to embrace these principles with representation from members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our Sports Operations team is empowered and encouraged to open a dialogue with teams when they see an opportunity to promote diversity and inclusivity within our spaces.

Please review and abide by the following throughout the tournament:

- **Stonewall Sports Player Code of Conduct:**
<https://stonewallsports.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/National-Code-of-Conduct-Tournament.pdf>
- **Stonewall Sports National Tournament Uniform Policy:**
<https://stonewallsports.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-Uniform-Policy.pdf>



Tournament Format

MATCHES

Each team is guaranteed at least 4 matches: 3 on Day 1 (Saturday) and at least 1 on Day 2 (Sunday).

DIVISIONS

Teams will be assigned to 1 of 3 divisions: the Competitive Division, REcreational Division, or the Social Division. Teams will only be assigned to play and officiate within their own division.

How to choose a division:

- **Competitive Division (teams with mostly players rated BB to AA/Open):** If your team is confident in your volleyball skills and you want a chance to test your serves, sets, and spikes, this is the league for you. The competitive division is best suited for teams and players who have a lot more experience playing indoor volleyball, want to compete against a similar level of teams/players, and are well-versed in the rules and fundamentals of the sport. (Think: We get 3 hits per side more than 75% of the time)
- **Recreational Division (teams with mostly players rated B to BB):** If all or several of your players feel excited about competing but don't feel as experienced or versed in the rules as the next higher division then this is the division for you. The recreational division is suited for teams who have more experience with indoor volleyball, want to enjoy a fun level of competition, and have a competent level of the rules. (Think: We get 3 hits per side 50%-75% of the time)
- **Social Division (teams with mostly players rated C to B):** If all or several of your team's players are newer to volleyball and still working on building fundamental skills, this is the league for you. The social division is suited for teams and players who are still learning the sport and are excited to participate in the tournament and have fun. Teams in this division may have the occasional flub serve and the odd fault here or there, but that's OK. This is a no-judgment zone. (Think: we get 3 hits per side less than 50% of the time)
- Stonewall Sports is committed to making sure that all players are able to enjoy the National Tournament regardless of skill level. Captains will submit their divisional preference during registration. Divisional placement will be confirmed after registration closes. We will try our best to accommodate everyone's preferred division.



SCHEDULES

Matches will tentatively be held between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on both days. Team schedules for Saturday will be announced in advance of the Tournament. Sunday schedules will be available following Saturday play.

Tournament Structure

DAY 1 - OCTOBER 24, 2026

Teams will be randomly assigned 3 matches against an opponent within their division.

Matches will be played to best 2 of 3 sets, time permitting, with 50 minutes scheduled for play.

Based on the results of the Day 1 matches, teams will be ranked to determine seeding for the Day 2 Bracket. Ranking will be determined as follows:

1. Ranking Points will be awarded based on the results of each Day 1 match.

Match Result	Points Awarded
2-0	2.0
2-1	1.5
1-1	1.0
1-2	0.5
0-2	0.0

2. Teams will also be assigned a Ratio of the total points scored (PS) to the total points scored against (PA) across all Day 1 matches.
3. Team Totals used for rankings will be the sum of the Ranking Points and the Ratio.
4. If necessary, tie breaks will be determined by tournament staff.

DAY 2 - OCTOBER 25, 2026

Based on the seeding from Day 1 matches, each team will be placed into their division's Elimination Bracket for Day 2 (see brackets below). Winning teams will advance through the bracket while losing teams will be eliminated (single elimination). Deciding matches will be played to determine 1st, 2nd, and 3rd placed teams.

Matches will be played best of 3 sets with 50 minutes scheduled for play.



Tournament Rules

The Stonewall Indoor Volleyball National Tournament will generally operate under the competition rules and regulations as adopted by USA Volleyball. The rules listed below are specific to our tournament and provide an overview of the sport. Where applicable, the rules below supersede the rules in the USA Volleyball Rule Book.

1. MATCH TIME & NUMBER OF SETS

- a. Matches are allotted 50 minutes for play. We ask that all players be respectful of time. Please be assembled and ready to play at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled match time. In the event a match directly before yours is running slightly over, please be patient and ready to play immediately upon conclusion of that match.
- b. During play, keep the match moving and avoid unnecessary delays. Intentionally stalling is not acceptable and may be penalized with a warning and then additional sanctions for offending players at the discretion of the referee.
 - i. Each team will be allowed a 30-second timeout each set.
- c. Each match will be played as the best of 3 sets. The first 2 sets of a match will be played to 25 points, using rally scoring. If a third set is necessary, it will be played to 15 points, using rally scoring.
- d. The first team in a set to score 25 points (or 15 points for the third set) with a minimum lead of 2 points will be the winner of that set.
- e. If the set score reaches 24–24, the first team to reach a 2-point advantage (e.g., 26–24) will be the winner of that set. Scoring is capped at 27 points for the first 2 sets and 17 points for the third.
- f. If a match reaches the time limit before the completion of the deciding set, the teams will be allowed a maximum of 5 minutes to finish the current set. If that set does not reach a winning score by the end of the additional 5 minutes, the match will end and the team with the most points will be declared the winner of that set.
 - i. All matches will be stopped following the additional 5 minutes. No additional time will be added, even if the tournament schedule can accommodate extended play.
- g. A new set may not begin at or after the expiration of the allotted time; if teams are tied 1–1 at/after the scheduled conclusion, the match ends in a tie.
- h. If a deciding set does not reach at least 10 total points (i.e., the sum of both teams' scores) prior to being ended for time, it will not be counted and only the scores of the first set(s) will stand. (Example: After the 5



additional minutes have concluded, the score of the current match is only 3–5. The match will not be counted.)

- i. The following procedure will be used to break a tie during the Sunday elimination bracket:
 1. League management will compare the score ratios (points scored divided by points scored against) of both teams across the completed sets. The team with the higher ratio will advance and the other team will be eliminated.
 2. If the teams' score ratios are also equal, league management will decide a winner by coin flip.

2. NET HEIGHT & PLAYING AREA

- a. As a co-ed tournament, we will strive to use a net height at or very near 7'9 5/8".
- b. Due to venue availability and limitations, the designated free area around the competition area may be smaller than is standard.
 - i. Players should be mindful of adjacent courts and avoid interfering with game play.
 - ii. If a ball or player from an adjacent court enters the playing area of a match, the head referee shall pause play until it can be safely resumed and redo the last serve.

3. TEAM COMPOSITION & UNIFORM

- a. Matches will be played with 6 players on the court at a time (6x6).
- b. A team may consist of up to 10 players, including the captain. A minimum of 4 players must be present to play a match.
- c. Player uniforms must be consistent with the 2026 Uniform Policy.
- d. All players must wear athletic shoes appropriate for play. Kneepads and additional protective equipment may be worn at players' discretion.

4. VOLUNTEER OFFICIALS

- a. Throughout the tournament, teams are required to provide 4 player volunteers to serve as the head referee, line judges, and scorekeeper for assigned matches. The schedule for volunteer officials will be published prior to the beginning of the tournament. Failure to provide volunteer officials will result in sanctions up to and including team disqualification from the tournament.



- b. Captains are responsible for ensuring that assigned volunteer officials are present, familiar with the rules and hand signals, and fully attentive to the match.

5. BEGINNING PLAY

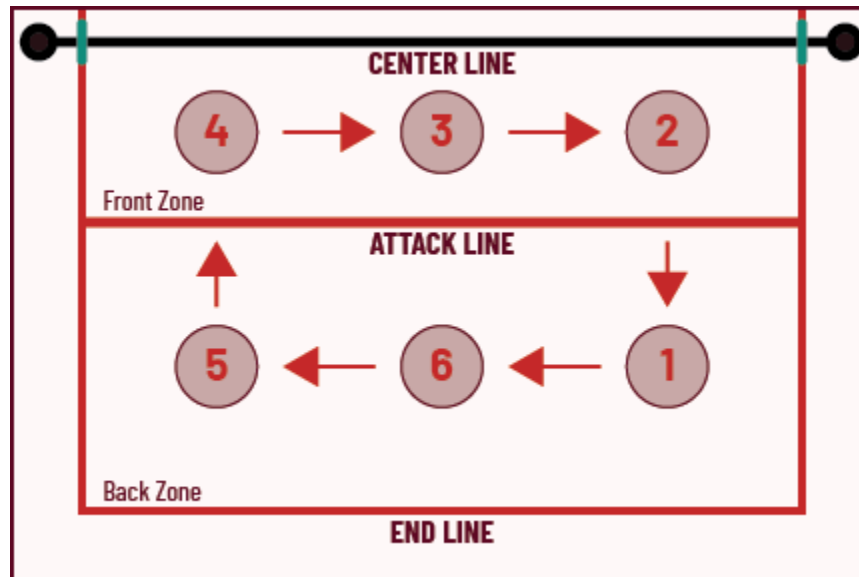
- a. Prior to the designated match time, the head referee will convene the team captains for a simple challenge, such as “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” The winner will choose either the right to serve or receive first or the side of the court. The other team will have second choice.
- b. Teams will switch sides between sets 1 and 2.
- c. Prior to a necessary third set, the head referee will summon the captains for another challenge to determine serve, receive, and sides of the court.

6. POSITIONS & ROTATIONS

- a. At the moment of service, each player must be positioned in rotational order on their own court (except the server), with 3 players in the front zone and 3 in the back zone.
 - i. Each back-row player must be positioned further back from the center line than the corresponding front-row player.
 - 1. Back-row players may not attack the ball in the front zone if the ball is above the top of the net.
 - ii. Players must be positioned laterally (side-to-side) in order (see diagram below).
 - iii. After the service hit, players may move freely on their court.
 - iv. Teams with fewer than 6 players present may decide how players are positioned in the front and back zones, but rotational order must be maintained.
- b. Each time a team gains the right to serve, players must rotate 1 position clockwise.
 - i. If the rotating team has more than 6 players present, 1 player will substitute out and 1 player will substitute in.
 - ii. A player arriving late may enter the rotation only if a complete rotation order has not occurred in the current set. If the team has fully rotated through, the late player may join in the subsequent sets. Players may enter as late as the third set.



- iii. All present players must rotate through all sets. Captains are responsible for ensuring that their rotations are fair and consistent. Deliberately excluding a player from a rotation for a competitive advantage is prohibited.
- iv. Teams **may** use a Libero. All players must rotate through all positions (with the exception of the libero).



- c. If a team wishes to utilize the libero position, it is the team's responsibility to clearly identify the libero and notify the referee and opposing team captain of the method used to identify the libero. Some suggested methods include colored arm bands, bandanas, or penny-style jersey worn over the regular uniform.
 - i. A team can only utilize 1 libero per set.
 - ii. A libero may serve for one player they are replacing in the back row

7. SCORING POINTS

- a. A team scores a point and wins the rally:
 - i. By successfully landing the ball on the opponent's court.
 - 1. The ball is "in" when any part of the ball touches the floor within and including the boundary lines.
 - 2. The ball is "out" when all parts of the ball touch the floor completely outside the boundary lines



- ii. When the opponent team commits a fault.
- b. The team to most recently score a point will gain or retain the right to serve.

8. PLAYING THE BALL

- a. Each team is allowed 3 contacts (hits) to return the ball to the opposing side.
 - i. The ball may touch any part of the body.
 - ii. The ball cannot be caught, lifted, thrown, or carried.
 - iii. No player can touch the ball twice in succession, including contact with multiple body parts.
 - iv. At the first hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action
 - v. At the second hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action, and the ball is next touched by a teammate.
- b. The ball is “out” if it:
 - i. Touches an object, including any overhead projections, or person outside the court.
 - ii. Touches an overhead projection or the ceiling above the court and then crosses the net to the opponent’s court.
 - 1. A ball made to contact the ceiling over a team’s court that falls back on that same side may still be played if it is within the team’s 3 allotted hits.
 - iii. Touches the antennae, ropes, posts or the net itself outside the side bands.
 - iv. Crosses over the net either partially or totally outside the crossing space.
 - v. Crosses under the net.

9. PLAY AT THE NET

- a. The ball may touch the net while crossing, including during the service.



- b. A player may not touch the net during play.
- c. A ball contacting the net is still playable within a team's 3 allotted hits.
- d. A blocking player may touch the ball beyond the net as long as it does not interfere with the attack hit.
- e. Touching the ball by breaking the plane above the net when attacking is not allowed.
- f. Players may partially cross the center line (under the net) as long as it does not interfere with opponents' play.

10. SERVICE

- a. Players must serve in a consistent order.
- b. The head referee will authorize the service.
 - i. The server will have 8 seconds after authorization to complete the service.
 - ii. Service before authorization is cancelled and will be repeated.
- c. Only 1 toss or release of the ball is allowed.
- d. The ball shall be hit with 1 hand or any part of the arm after being tossed or released from the hands.
- e. Service must take place completely behind the end line.
- f. The opposing team may not block or attack a serve.
 - i. A served ball can be returned on the first hit so long as contact is made after the ball is below the top of the net.

11. BLOCKING

- a. Blocking is the action of intercepting the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net.
- b. Block touches do not count against a team's 3 allotted hits.
- c. The first hit after a block can be made by any player, including the player who touched the ball during the block (an exception to the 2 hits rule).



12. PLAYER CONDUCT

- a. If a player exhibits any behavior that deliberately subverts tournament rules or the mission of Stonewall Sports, verbal warnings and/or removal from the tournament can be issued by the referee or tournament staff.
- b. Three levels of sanctions are available to the referee and may be issued at their discretion. Depending on the nature of the offense, these sanctions need not be issued in order:
 - i. Verbal warning to the player(s) and team captain.
 - ii. Yellow card to the individual player(s) committing the offense. A player issued a yellow card is removed from the current set, and service is given to the opposing team. Players issued a yellow card may return to play in a subsequent set.
 - 1. Yellow cards apply to individual players; however, they also serve as a verbal warning to the entire team. Teammates committing a similar infraction will not receive an additional warning but will automatically be issued a yellow card.
 - iii. Red card to the individual player(s) committing the offense. A player issued a red card is removed from the match, and service is given to the opposing team.
 - 1. Players receiving a red card are disqualified for at least the remainder of the current match. Red cards will be reviewed by tournament staff who may impose additional sanctions based on the nature of the incident.
- c. Captains may calmly discuss a play with the referee for the purpose of clarification or explanation of what was observed. Referees may discuss these plays with line judges, but captains may not approach line judges directly. Referees may consult tournament staff regarding rules, but the final decision rests solely with the referee.
- d. Captains may also bring to the attention of the referee any opposing player they believe is intentionally violating the rules. In such cases the referee may pay specific attention to the player in question and may call upon a member of tournament staff for additional support.
- e. No player may argue with or berate any referee, official, or opponent. Violations will be subject to immediate sanction up to and including a red card at the discretion of the referee. Any player who exhibits overly or consistently aggressive behavior or who physically contacts or personally insults any referee, official, or opponent will receive an automatic red card.



- f. Arguments between teams, up to and including fighting, will result in red cards issued directly to all involved players and may result in the immediate ending of the match at the discretion of the referee and tournament staff.

13. INJURIES & PLAYER SAFETY

- a. Player safety must always be the priority of all referees, officials, and tournament staff. Referees have complete discretion to halt a match to ensure player safety. Referees have authority to take any necessary measures to ensure safe conditions prior to resuming play.
- b. In the event of an injury, the match shall be stopped by the referee and the injured player removed from the court when it is safe to do so. If the injured player is unable to return to play, a new player should be rotated into the set.
- c. All player injuries must be reported to tournament staff.

