

2026 ACS Volleyball Rules

Last updated January 2026

Mercy Rule: This mercy rule applies for all competitions except for 1st Seniors.

A player cannot serve more than 5 times in a row. If that happens, the team who is serving rotates position but maintains the serve.

See 6. Scoring below for the number of sets to be played in each division.

Umpires: 1st & 2nd Senior competitions will have an external accredited umpire appointed by the home team.

1. All games will be played under the rules of the Volleyball Australia unless otherwise stated hereunder or in ACS Competition Rules.
 - 1.1. The 'A' game is to be umpired by the home coach unless it is otherwise agreed by both coaches.
 - 1.2. For 1st grade, the home team should aim to be played on a full size court where available
 - 1.3. For the Grand Final, if the court allows it must be full size

For **SENIORS** only; ACS will use the **Libero Rule**. Please refer to the end of the Volleyball rules for information regarding the Libero. These are taken from the FIVB Rules.

2. Team:
 - 2.1. Consists of an 'A' and 'B' team or a 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th and so on for seniors. Each team consists of a maximum of twelve team members.
 - 2.2. Each team will compete as a separate team. No interchange between teams once matches have commenced.
 - 2.3. Home team to provide the balls
 - 2.4. Each team is limited to 1 time out per set.
 - 2.4.1. **Trial in 2026** (and to be reviewed at the end of 2026): Except for the Senior 1st competition whereby teams are permitted two time outs per set. Time outs are limited to 30 seconds.
 - 2.5. **With Flexible fixturing: For Girls Years 7 A & Intermediate A & B teams:** will play a full match best of 5 sets. Year 7 'B' and 'C' teams will share time on the second court and play 45 minute matches with the best of 3 sets. See 6. Scoring below for details. If a school has 2 teams only then two best of 5 matches are played. If a team has 3 courts available and it is by mutual agreement to use 3 courts, then matches are played to best of 5 sets. In Finals: matches limited to 45 minutes in the home and away season are played as the best of 5 sets

3. Net Height

BOYS	
Senior	2.43m
Intermediate	2.24m
Year 7	2.24m
GIRLS	
Senior	2.24m
Intermediate	2.15m
Year 7	2.10m

4. Serve:

- 4.1. The ball must not be served until the referee has blown the whistle.

As play does not begin until the whistle is blown, no penalty can be awarded. A replay is called and the ball is returned to the server.
- 4.2. The ball must leave the resting hand before being served. (Not a handpass as in football).
- 4.3. Players may serve from anywhere along the baseline. Server has eight seconds to serve the ball after the referee's whistle.
- 4.4. The ball may touch the net on a serve. This is acceptable with 'play on' called.
- 4.5. The player's foot must not make contact with any part of the service line. Penalty: Loss of serve.

5. **Rotation and Substitution:** On every occasion when the receiving team gains the right to serve, the players rotate one position clock-wise.

5.1. **Year 7, Intermediate modified rotation rule applies:** A team with greater than 6 players may choose certain players not to participate in that set. If they have 7, they may choose to play 6 only. If they have 9, they can choose 6, 7, 8 or 9 players. This does not give the right to substitute like in Senior Volleyball though. The team must complete the whole set with the players selected at the beginning of the set which must be made clear to the umpire and opposition coach.

**It is advised that the non-selected players wear a contrasting bib or sit off the playing area so the umpire can clearly see who is and who is not participating in the set.*

5.2. **Senior 1st - 4th Substitutions:** A starting player may re-enter the court three times but only for the player he/she is replaced with. The substitute player may take any position on the court.

6. Scoring:

- Senior boys competitions 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and senior girls; 1st, 2nd and 3rds will play best of 5 sets
- Senior girls 4th, 5th, 6th and 7ths & intermediate boys A & B can play best of 5 sets if the court space is available, otherwise best of 3 sets will be played.
- Intermediate girls A, B and intermediate boys A, B will play best of 5 sets
- Year 7 Girls A and Year 7 Boys A will play best of 5 sets.
- Option for Year 7 Boys B to play best of 5 or best of 3 sets as there are only 2 divisions in Year 7 Boys and 2 courts are still needed.

With those games played to the best of five sets, with each being played to 25 rally scoring points, except for the 5th set which is played to 15 points with a 2 point advantage. All sets must be won by at least 2 points, i.e. - 26/24. Note: Fifth set scoring is to 15 with a 2 point advantage. A 5th set must commence up until 3.50 pm and once the 5th set has commenced it must be completed. No time outs during the 5th set.

7. **Result if a match is unfinished due to time expiring or light failure etc:-** For a result to be declared three sets must have been completed, then the score as it stands when play ceased shall be taken as the final result. If the score is 2-2 sets all at 4.00 pm then the match will be decided on points.

Should three sets not have been completed then it is deemed a draw.

8. **Maximum finishing time:** is 4.00pm; except when the 5th set has commenced by 3.50 pm and must be completed as noted above under "Scoring".

9. Matches played to the best of 3 sets:

For Years Girls 7 B & C and Intermediate Girls & Boys C and D teams: will play the best of 3 sets (a match is won by the team that wins two sets) but games are limited to 45 minutes; the score after 45 minutes determines the result. In the case of a 1-1 tie, the deciding 3rd set is played to 15 points with a minimum lead of 2 points. If sets are tied after 45 minutes, it is deemed a draw.

9.1. **In Finals:** all matches are played as the best of 5 sets as per scoring under Rule 6.

10. **Contact with the ball:** The ball may strike any part of the body cleanly. In other words, the ball should not be carried or hit with an open flat hand. Referees may need to be particularly lenient in Year 7 and 8 matches.

- On first hit of the team - Referee should call catch and throws.
- On subsequent hits - Referee should call obvious double hits, catches, throws and carries.

11. State of Play:

11.1. Ball in play - The ball is in play from the moment of the hit of the service authorized by the first referee.

11.2. Ball out of play - The ball is out of play at the moment of the fault which is whistled by the referee.

11.3. Ball "in" - The ball is "in" when it touches the floor of the playing court, including the boundary lines.

11.4. Ball "out" - The ball is out when:

11.4.1. The part of the ball that touches the floor is completely outside the boundary lines

11.4.2. It touches an object outside the court, the ceiling or a person out of play

11.4.3. It touches the antennae or post

11.4.4. It crosses completely the lower space under the net

12. **Replay of Point:**

12.1. If a foreign object enters the court such as a ball from an adjacent court, a replay is to be signalled immediately

12.2. If the ball makes contact with a body deemed to be interfering above the "Playing area".

13. **Forfeits:** A team may play with a minimum of four players. Anything less constitutes a forfeit.

14. **Uniforms:**

14.1. All players must wear the accepted sports uniform of their school.

14.2. All players should be uniformly dressed.

15. **Courtesy and Safety:**

- The ball is to be returned to the serving side by rolling the ball under the net.
- No-one is to be allowed to stand or walk across the back or end of court. This may lead to distraction of the opposing team.
- No player is permitted to wear objects which may cause injury (i.e. watches, bracelets etc). Players may wear glasses or lenses at their own risk.

16. **Role of Captain:** When the ball is out of play only the team captain is authorised to speak to the referee

16.1. To ask clarification of a decision:

16.1.1. To change all or part of the equipment

16.1.2. To check the floor, net, the Ball etc

16.1.3. To verify positions of the teams

16.1.4. To request Time-outs and substitutions

16.2. At the conclusion of the match the team captains should thank the referee.

17. **Protocols for Volleyball Coaches and Referees:** Requirements for the Sports Coaches and Referees (In addition to ACS Competition Rules issued by ACS). On arrival at venue, the coaches from each team are to introduce themselves. At this point discussion is to take place to determine:

- Which court will host the 'A' match and which will host the 'B' match.
- Any local court requirements.
- If the ball makes contact with any object protruding over the playing area (i.e. low hanging ropes, basketball rings, scaffolding etc), a replay is to be called.
- The boundary markings of the court. (Some courts require the service line to be brought into court due to the distance to the back walls).

Prior to the commencement of each match, the referee should explain to both teams the ruling that he/she will use. Explain local requirements to players.

Call on each captain and ensure that they shake hands. The home team captain is to toss the coin while the away team captain calls. The winner of the toss chooses: Either the right to serve or receive the service OR which end they start on. The loser takes the remaining choice. If a fifth or deciding set is to be played, a new toss will be carried out to determine which team serves and at which end the teams will start.

The starting six players from both teams should then move to line up on the service line at the back of the court until called into court by the referee.

At the completion of the match, all players are to shake hands with the opposition and thank them for the match

From the FIVB Rules:

18. **The Libero Player:**

18.1. Designation of the Libero

18.1.1. Each team has the right to designate from the list of players on the score sheet up to two (2) specialised defensive players: Liberos.

All Liberos must be recorded on the score sheet before the match in the special lines reserved for this.

One Libero designated by the coach before the start of the match, will be the starting Libero.

The Libero on court is the Acting Libero. If there is another Libero, he/she will act as the second Libero.

18.1.2. Only one Libero may be on court at any time. Libero can be changed each set.

18.1.3. **The Libero cannot be either team captain or game captain at the same time as performing as a Libero.**

18.2. **Equipment:** The Libero players must wear a uniform (or jacket/bib for the re-designated Libero) whose jerseys at least must contrast in colour with that of the other members of the team. The Libero uniform may have a different design, but it must be numbered like the rest of the team members.

18.3. **Actions Involving the Libero:** The Playing Actions:

18.3.1. The Libero is allowed to replace any player in a back row position.

18.3.2. He/she is restricted to perform as a back row player and is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere (including playing court and free zone) if at the moment of the contact, the ball is entirely higher than the top of the net.

18.3.3. He/she may not serve, block or attempt to block.

A player may not complete an attack hit from higher than the top of the net, if the ball is coming from an overhand finger pass by a Libero in his/her front zone. The ball may be freely attacked if the Libero makes the same action from outside his/her front zone.