

City of Dubuque, IA  
Parks & Recreation Department

# Adult Volleyball Rules

As of 10/23/25



## OBJECTIVE

The Parks & Recreation Department adult volleyball leagues are intended to provide players of all abilities with the opportunity to participate in organized league play. **Fair play** and **sportsmanship** are the responsibility of each player, captain, and spectator.

## ELIGIBILITY

Players must be at least 18 years old to participate. All players must have their name, address, and signature on a team roster to be considered a “legal” player, or fill out a player card before the game begins. Players are only allowed to play on one team per night. However, players on a women’s team may play on a mixed league team if the leagues fall on the same night.

## GENERAL RULES

1. The Parks & Rec. Department is not responsible for any injuries or accidents incurred by players.
2. The Parks & Rec. Department must be notified immediately when teams change managers in order that the new manager may receive the proper league information. Failure to notify the Leisure Services Department about any change could cause forfeits when makeup information is emailed and/or mailed. It is your responsibility to inform your team members about all city league rules.
3. All players must wear gym shoes while on the court. No street shoes allowed. During the winter leagues, do not wear game shoes to the gymnasium. During the summer leagues. Barefoot is not allowed. Uniforms are not required by team members.
4. The Parks & Rec. Department reserves the authority to forfeit any match in which an infraction of league rules has been committed, and reserves the right to remove any player from competition for any length of time for directing abusive language at supervisors or individuals of the opposing team and for unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. Current U.S.A. volleyball rules apply, unless otherwise stated.

## PLAYERS & ROSTER REQUIREMENTS

1. All players must be at least 18 years old.
2. All players must be listed on the teams’ roster.
3. New players will be allowed to hand in a completed player card to the gym supervisor and be allowed to play that night.

4. Teams must carry a minimum of six (6) players, with a maximum of twenty (20) players on their roster.
5. Teams must have a minimum of 4 players to start a game. For mixed leagues, teams must have at least two men and two women to start a game. There cannot be more men than women on the court at any time throughout a game. However, teams may have more women than men on the court.
6. If a team does not have 4 legal players ready to start at the scheduled game time, that team will lose its first match. That team will be allowed an additional fifteen minutes from the scheduled start time to field a legal team. If four legal players are not ready after those fifteen minutes, the team will lose the other two games of the match and pay a forfeit fee of \$35.00.
7. If at any point during the match a team has only 3 players, that team will forfeit the current game and any remaining games for that night.
8. In women's leagues, teams may have 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 players on the court during a game. Proper service rotation must be maintained.

## **SPECIAL MIXED LEAGUE RULES**

1. In mixed leagues, teams may have 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 players on the court during a game as long as the male to female ratio is not greater than 50%. Example: 3 males; 3 females, 4 males; 4 females, 3 males; 4 females. The only exception would be:
  - a. Injury to a female player causing her to leave the game with no legal female substitute available, or
  - b. If, after starting the game, for any reason the team should fall below 6 players. If a female substitute arrives, she must be placed on the court immediately.
2. There must be at least one male player.
3. Men and women must take alternate positions in the serving order.
4. When the ball is played more than once by a team, a female player must make one of these contacts. A block is not considered a hit.
5. Teams may always use more women than men.
6. Teams may use three men and two women only if a female player gets hurt or cannot physically continue to play.

## **PROTESTS**

1. Protests regarding player eligibility will not be allowed after two weeks of the illegal participation. Teams found using non-rostered players will forfeit any and all games in which the individual(s) have participated. Any rule misinterpretation, not judgment calls, may be discussed and resolved by the two team captains only. The legality of a play may be investigated by the Parks & Rec. Department upon written request of a team manager.

## **SCORING/TIME LIMIT**

1. Rally scoring will be used for all leagues.
2. All games will be played to 25 points, win by two, or to 30 points, whichever comes first.
3. A one-hour time limit will be allowed for the three (3) 25-point rally scoring games.
4. At the end of one (1) hour, the team with at least a two point advantage is declared the winner. If there is no two point advantage, play continues until there is one, or to 30 points, whichever comes first.
5. Any matches not started due to the time limit will be declared a tie in the standings.

## **STARTING THE GAME**

1. The managers shall toss a coin to determine who serves first. The coin toss winner may choose to serve, receive or the choice of courts.
2. Sides must be changed after each match.
3. The team not serving first in the previous game of a match shall serve first in the next game.

## **PLAYING THE BALL**

1. Contacting the ball during play must be brief and instantaneous. The ball may be hit with any part of the body.
2. When the ball comes to rest momentarily in the hands or arms of a player, it is considered as being held. The ball must be cleanly hit. Scooping, lifting, pushing or carrying the ball shall be considered as holding.
3. A ball that strikes the ceiling or overhead obstruction is considered live and playable, providing this occurs on the side of the net occupied by the team which played it last, and provided the ball is legally played next by the same team. Balls striking basketball backboards and nets in down position as well as equipment considered an extension of, or from the gym wall, are dead and out of bounds.
4. The ball may be contacted only three (3) times before it is sent over the net. For exception, see blocking.
5. A hit is interpreted to mean one contact by one person.
6. If two players strike the ball simultaneously, it is only one hit and either player may hit the ball again.
7. Successive contacts are legal on the first team hit so long as it is one attempt to play the ball. However, a ball rolling up the arm on a first contact is still considered a held ball.
8. It is legal to use finger play to hit a ball on serve reception, but the ball must be cleanly hit, not slapped or held.
9. Second or third row players may not contact the ball in front of the ten foot attack line to spike a ball that is clearly above the height of the net.
10. In all mixed leagues, when the ball is played more than once by a team, a female player must make one of these contacts. A block is not considered a hit.
11. A ball touching a boundary line is good and counted in.

## **NET PLAY**

1. If a ball in play touches the net, it is considered good and play continues. If a serve touches the net, the ball remains live and play continues.
2. The ball may be played when any part of it has crossed the top of the net. It is not essential for the entire ball to be on a player's side of the net before being played.
3. A player is not allowed to spike the ball on the opposite side of the net. Players may follow through over the net providing the first contact with the ball is on the player's own side of the net.
4. A player contacting the net at the top of the net during play has committed a violation (**U.S.A. RULE**).

## **BLOCKING**

1. Blocking is the action at the end of attempting to intercept the ball coming from the opponent's side. Any player is considered as having the intention to block if any part of the body is placed above the height of the net in a position at the net.
2. Any or all players on the front line may perform blocking. Any attempt to block is considered as an actual block only if one or more blockers contact the ball. The team which has affected an actual block shall have the right to three (3) more contacts in order to return the ball to the opponent's court.

3. Any player participating in a block in which the ball is contacted shall have the right to make the next contact, with such contact counting as the first of three contacts allowed to the team.
4. If the ball contacts one or more players during the block, this will be counted as only one block for the team even if these contacts are not made simultaneously by the teammates participating in the block.
5. Any blocker(s) may reach over the net. However, the blocker(s) shall not contact the ball over the opponent's area until after the completion of the opponent's action, which sends the ball toward the blocker's side.
6. Blocking and spiking the serve is prohibited.
7. Back row players may not block at the net.

## **CROSSING THE CENTER LINE**

1. Contact with any part of a player's body with the opponent's side of the court during play results in a fault.
2. Touching the opponent's area with a foot or feet, hand or hands, which remains on or above the center line is not a fault.

## **SUBSTITUTIONS**

1. A female player may substitute for any female or male player.
2. A male player may substitute for any other male player and for a female only if it does not violate the 50% rule.
3. Continuous Substitution
  - a. When it is a team's turn to serve, a person will always substitute into the position following the serving position.
  - b. The order of rotation must be continuous throughout a game unless there is an injury.
  - c. In mixed volleyball leagues, substitutions shall be done on a male for male, female for female basis. In women's leagues, your team must substitute each time they serve if you use this method of substitution.
4. USA Substitution
  - a. A player starting a game may be replaced by a substitute and may subsequently re-enter the game, in the original position in the service order in relation to other teammates.
  - b. Only these two players may play in this position but are not limited to number of times they enter the game.
  - c. Only if a team is reduced to less than six players and there are no other legal substitutes, may one of the above players participate in a different position in the service order of that game.

## **TIME-OUTS**

1. Teams may take two (2) thirty second time-outs during a game.
2. Time-outs may be taken any time the ball is not in play.
3. Time-outs may not be used to avoid a forfeit.

## **RULES APPLYING TO SUMMER LEAGUES ONLY**

1. Alcoholic beverages are not recommended on the volleyball court or by participants while playing.
2. All spectators should be on the grass area when not playing, for safety reasons.
3. Players may go after balls in unoccupied courts only. The ball should be dead when it enters a court scheduled for use. Common sense should be used when applying this rule.
4. Sides shall be changed in the third game, after one team scores thirteen (13) points unless both team managers agree that it's not necessary.

5. Managers, please inform your team members that participants should park their vehicles in the Flora Swimming Pool parking lot and walk to the volleyball courts, or vehicles may parallel park on the shoulder of the drive near the volleyball courts. However, do not park in the grass. "No Parking" signs are posted near the softball fields because of safety and traffic concerns. Police officers and park patrol will ticket vehicles parked illegally.
6. If any part of a match is canceled due to weather, only completed games will count. For example, if a game is 13-8 and the game is stopped due to weather, this game will be rescheduled at a later date with a score of 0-0. Please indicate on the score sheet who served first in game one.

## **RULES APPLYING TO WINTER LEAGUES ONLY**

1. Under no circumstances will the Parks & Rec. Department reschedule a game, with the exception of extremely poor weather conditions, or in the inability to use the gym facility. Managers of teams to play will be notified by the Leisure Services Department.
2. All teams must respect school rules pertaining to the use of the gyms. No smoking or drinking alcohol anywhere on school grounds, or eating in the gym or locker rooms, and proper care of the shower rooms and equipment. The use of resin on hands or shoes will not be allowed. Any participant intentionally defacing or damaging school or Leisure Services Department property will be suspended from the program as well as financially compensating for any damages.
3. All players and spectators are expected to park in legal areas.

## **SCHEDULES/STANDINGS**

Schedules, scores, standings, and league information will be posted on Team Sideline. Please visit [www.teamsideline.com/dubuque](http://www.teamsideline.com/dubuque) to view our city sports page.

- Schedule changes will be made on Team Sideline. Be sure to check the website for changes and updates regularly, as changes may be made due to rainouts.
- The Parks & Rec. Department reserves the right to change and/or adapt any volleyball schedules in any way necessary to operate the leagues.
- Anytime there are make-ups, rescheduling, rainouts, playoffs, tournaments, etc., they will be scheduled in accordance to the availability of the Parks & Rec. Department facilities and staff. **If necessary, teams may have to play makeup games on nights, times and at other facilities, other than their normal league night.**

The Parks & Rec. Department and Recreation Supervisor has the right to enforce these and other rules deemed necessary to provide a safe, fun, and quality league.

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