Rules and Best Practices

Mission Statement and Summary

Changes/Additions as of 8/8/2017

**Mission Statement:** The Sun City Lincoln Hills Water Volleyball group has been organized for the purpose of promoting recreational water volleyball and is open to all residents of SCLH.

**Summary:** The following are Rules and Best Practices which apply equally to Recreational Play and to Competitive Play.

Since there is no authoritative organization providing water volleyball rules, these rules have been extracted from various official volleyball organizations and adapted to the water environment, based on our years of experience with the SCLH Water Volleyball Group.

This is not an exhaustive set of rules and best practices, but should provide the member with a working knowledge to enjoy this recreation, yet provide a framework to minimize confusion and conflict. Because of the nature of a moving net in water, we wish to limit calls of infractions to those that are obvious to the consensus of both teams. By the nature of the game, each side has the authority to call the ball out-of-bounds or dead on their own side.

**TERMINOLOGY**

1. **Block** - the action of a player near the net to intercept the ball coming from the offensive team by reaching higher than the top of the net while not touching the net* EXCEPTION: If a player has a failed block, the same player may hit the ball again. The failed block will not count as one of the three hits allowed.

2. **Catch and Throw** - continuous contact with the ball with the absence of a hit for more than 6 to 8 inches of arm travel. (Ball is caught, cradled, lifted, or thrown); an infraction resulting in a dead ball*

3. **Competitive Play** - requires participation in a rating/ranking process to qualify and use of heavier ball (aka “blue ball”)

4. **Dead Ball** - ball is no longer in play (e.g. ball out of bounds, infraction, grounded)

5. **Double hit/double contact** - a player hits the ball twice in succession (even if off the net) or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body twice

6. **Fault/Infraction** – a violation of the rules, results in a dead ball

7. **Grounding** – when the ball hits the water or floats, results in dead ball

8. **Hit** – any touch or contact with the ball
9. **Net One, Net Two** - the net closest to the door is designated as Net One, the net at the far end of the pool is Net Two

10. **Recreational Play** - emphasis on recreation, open to all players, played with a lighter ball (aka “red ball”)

11. **Pass/Set** – assisting a teammate in hitting the next hit

12. **Plane of Ball** - any portion of the ball over the vertical plane of the net

13. **Rally** - once the ball has been successfully played on both sides

14. **Ranked (Rated) Players** – players who have participated in a skill set assessment for competitive level of play

15. **Serve/Service** - The initial hit that begins a rally

16. **Serving Position** - The player serving shall be in the back rightmost position*

17. **Spike/Strike/Attack/** – slamming the ball over the net onto opponents’ side of the net*

* See Rules

**RULES**

Introduction: The complete rules are extensive and this document does not attempt to cover every rule. Put simply, play proceeds as follows: a player on one of the teams begins play by serving the ball from the serving position, over the net, and into the receiving team's court. The receiving team must not let the ball be grounded within their court. The receiving team must hit the ball at least twice before returning it to the serving team to start the rally.

The rally continues, with each team allowed as many as three consecutive hits, until either: 1) a team makes a kill, grounding the ball on the opponent's court and winning the rally; 2) the ball goes out of bounds; 3) or a team commits a fault and loses the rally. An individual player may not touch the ball twice consecutively. The team that wins the rally is awarded a point and the serve.

1. **SCORING**: A game is won by the team which reaches 21 points. A point is awarded to the team that wins a rally. Failure to place a service in play results in a point for the receiving team.

2. **SERVING**: A serve is considered to have been returned when it crosses the vertical plane of the net. After the serve, the receiving team must hit the ball at least two times before the serve is returned.
a) It is the responsibility of the server to determine that the receiving team is organized and ready for the service. Service when the receiving team is not ready may result in a replay of the service at the discretion of the receiving team. Service when the serving team is not ready will not result in a replay.
b) A serve that hits the net and goes over is still in play.
c) The ball must be hit, not thrown. The ball must be tossed in the air (leaving both hands) before it is struck.
d) Serving Position – A server must stand in the rightmost rotational position, within 2 feet of the rightmost boundary and 2 feet from the back line.

EXCEPTION: During recreational play only, for Level 1 and 2 with physical limitations, it is understood they may make slight accommodations to their serve. Level 3 shall adhere to the same rules as for Competitive play.

3. HITS: If the ball bounces off a person, it counts as a valid hit.

   a) When two players on the same team hit the ball simultaneously, it counts as one hit. Any player may hit the next ball, including one of these two players.
   b) If the ball is grounded, the ball is dead.

4. OUT OF BOUNDS: The ball is considered to be out of bounds any time that the ball touches a side boundary marker or the pool deck before touching water.

   NOTE: Each side is responsible for calling the ball either out of bounds or a dead ball on balls hit to their side of the net.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out of Bounds</th>
<th>Inbounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side boundary (before hitting the water)</td>
<td>Back boundary lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any part of the ceiling (Excluding flags or any banners)</td>
<td>Simultaneously hits the water and side boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of the pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pole on the handicap chair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball lands in the areas beyond the boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   NOTE: Each side is responsible for calling the ball either out of bounds or a dead ball on balls hit to their side of the net.

5. OVER THE NET: In both Recreational and Competitive volleyball, reaching beyond the net is an infraction except under these two conditions:

   a) When executing a follow-through of a hit: After a spike, a player is permitted to pass his/her hand beyond the net, provided that the contact has been made within his/her own playing space. Also applies to a second hit attempt on a serve return.
   b) When blocking: A blocker may touch the ball beyond the net, provided that he/she does not interfere with the opponent’s play before or during the opponent’s spike.
In either case, no contact with the net is permitted. Violating this rule shall result in a dead ball, and the offending team loses the point and serve.

**EXCEPTION:** Hard spiking is discouraged in Recreational Play.

6. **BLOCKING:** No blocking on a serve. A blocker may touch the ball beyond the net, provided that he/she does not interfere with the opponent’s play before or during the latter’s spike. No contact with the net is permitted. The net support poles and bottom feet are considered part of the net.

7. **DEAD BALL:** Dead balls are balls that are no longer in play as a result of out-of-bounds, grounding, or an infraction. The offending team loses the point and the serve.

8. **CONTACT WITH NET:** Players must avoid blatant contact with the net. An infraction shall result in a dead ball and the offending team shall suffer the loss of the point and the serve. Pulling or pushing the net in an effort to have a ball fall on a desired side of the net is not allowed.

9. **CARRYING - CATCH AND THROW:** When playing the ball, a player’s hand must hit the ball in such a manner that the ball will rebound from the contact with the player. The player’s hand may not maintain continuous contact for more than 6 to 8 inches of arm travel, (known as “holding” or “palming”) with the ball in such a way that the ball is caught and thrown in any manner.

10. **COMPETITIVE PLAY:** The purpose of Competitive Play is to provide an opportunity for those players who are considered to possess a higher level of volleyball skills to play against each other. Eligibility is based upon skills competency and shall be determined by a semi-annual ranking process (see appendix for ranking procedure). Players may be reassigned between nets following ranking periods.

   a) Desired skills for competitive play include: the ability to spike; to block spiked balls; to pass and set up from the back lines to the front line; to pass the ball laterally across the front line; to play the ball off the net; to serve well; to exhibit a willingness to keep the ball in play by stretching, reaching and diving for the ball; and approaching the game as a team player. Additionally, players are expected to play a “smart game” by knowing where their opponent is strongest and weakest, and anticipating where to play the ball next if it comes to them.

   b) The ball to be used will be a ball specifically designed for water volleyball, rather than the lightweight balls used for Recreational Play.

   c) **Leave of Absence Guidelines** are recommended to manage situations where Competitive Players on Levels 4, 5 & 6 are absent from play. These guidelines are as follows:

   1) When a player is not available to play for a month or more:

      - Notify the Competitive Play Coordinator (CPC), designee, and/or the Steering Committee Chairperson via email at sclhwatervolleyball@gmail.com.
      - Indicate when the absence will start and end.
2) When a player is absent for 1 – 3 months and doesn’t make prior notification:

- The CPC or designee will try to contact the player up to 3 times.
- Based on the results of the contact, the CPC will decide if any action needs to be taken.
- If a player cannot be contacted after 3 months but returns before 5 months, s/he will be moved from their current level to the next lower level.
- If a player cannot be contacted after 5 or more months, s/he will lose their ranking position.
- When the player returns, the CPC will decide if s/he starts over from Level 4 or Level 3.

3) When a player is absent for 3 months or more, whether s/he had contact or no contact with the CPC:

- A substitute, chosen from the top 4 ranked players of the next lower level, will be invited to move.
- A substitute will be chosen beginning with the highest ranked player from that lower level.
- If s/he declines, the next highest ranked player will be asked until one is found.
- If all 4 players decline, then this will be considered a special circumstance and the CPC will determine what action need to be taken, if any.
- For absences less than 3 months, a player will not be temporarily replaced.

4) When a player is absent 3 months or more, and does contact the CPC:

- Upon the return of the absent player, s/he will retain his or her prior level, moving the substitute back to his or her original level.

Note 1: If there are 3 or more players absent at the same time, no matter what the reason, then the CPC will decide if action needs to be taken.

Note 2: The returning player has the option to move down a level if he or she isn’t ready to play at the prior level. In that case the substitute will remain until the next ranking.

Note 3: If a ranking occurs while a player is absent, that player will be ranked at his or her current level. If the absent player is ranked to the next level down, he or she will move to that level upon his or her return.

5) If a player decides s/he wants to move down a level:

- S/he will be replaced by a player coming from the top 4 of the next lower level.
- Based on the most recent ranking, the highest ranked player will be invited to move up.
• If s/he declines, the next highest ranked player will be invited to move up until one is found.
• The person moving up will be ranked at the higher level at the next ranking period.
• If none of the 4 players wants to move up, it will be considered as a special circumstance and the CPC will decide what action needs to be taken.

6) Players who have moved down a level:

• That player will be ranked on the lower level.
• S/he will not be included on the list of players wanting to move up a level.
• If a player who has moved down decides s/he wants to move back up a level, then s/he will be put on the list of players wanting to move up at ranking time.

7) When a circumstance happens that is not written in these Competitive Play Guidelines, it will be considered as a special circumstance, and the CPC will decide what actions need to be taken.

8) Level 4 players come under these guidelines. Absence will be considered a special circumstance and the CPC will decide what actions need to be taken.

9) All Recreational Level 3 players need to be evaluated before moving up to Level 11.

11. GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES: Good sportsmanship guidelines are designed to keep all of our members feeling valued and respected.
   a) By being patient with those who are just developing their skills or have physical limitations, those around you will adapt a similar behavior in the water.
   b) Hurtful remarks and rolling your eyes only cause another player to have low self-esteem.
   c) All levels of players need to share the ball and not constantly pass over a player or jump in front of them.
   d) Please do not offer playing tips for others unless you are asked. That’s what training sessions are for.
   e) Always look for opportunities to encourage, not criticize, other players.

12. UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR: Unsportsmanlike conduct is inappropriate behavior that affects another member in a disruptive or negative manner. This type of infraction or combination of infractions, when reported, will be recorded by the Steering Committee. This conduct may lead to serious disciplinary action by the Steering Committee. Repeat offender’s violations of this policy will not be tolerated. This club’s concern is always the health and safety of our members. The following are examples of unsportsmanlike behavior:
a) Any intentional action that threatens another member
   1. A hard spike which injures another player
   2. Any action that causes a member to feel uncomfortable or threatened
   3. Laying a hand on another player with questionable intent
   4. Any physical altercation between members
b) Inappropriate Recreational Play
   1. Failure to adjust one’s (i.e. Level 5 or Level 6) play to the level of play time slot (i.e. Level 1, 2, or 3).
   2. Continuous spiking to a player who does not have the ability to block a spike
   3. Continuous serving to a weaker player
c) Inappropriate Responses During All Levels of Play
   1. Excessive swearing or vulgar language
   2. Rough water splashing in anger
   3. Negative attitude or hostility towards others
   4. Bullying members in or out of the water
d) Cyber bullying (all forms of social media, i.e. email or texting) and inappropriate use of membership email addresses.

13. RESOLVING INFRACTION DISPUTES AND NON-SPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR: The club encourages “Self-Reporting” of a player’s infraction, (hitting the net, interference, touching a ball going out of bounds, double hit, water ball, catch and carry, etc.). When there is a dispute about whether an infraction occurred or who did it, the club encourages the players to work it out, in most cases by replaying the point. If captains are present, then they should resolve the dispute.

Any member in the pool has the right to stop play and address a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable by using the stop play sign of crossed arms over head or taking the ball and announcing that play has been stopped.

The Steering Committee can only resolve situations that are reported. Unsportsmanlike behavior that is reported will result in disciplinary action based on the infraction and review by the Steering Committee. There may be an oral warning, a written warning or suspended play based on the type of infraction and/or the number of times it has been committed by the member. Extreme cases may result in termination from the club.

The primary goal of the LH Water Volleyball Club is to have fun with no one feeling angry, frustrated or intimidated after playing. Any player experiencing or witnessing unsportsmanlike behavior needs to report the incident to any Steering Committee member by emailing schlwatervolleyball@gmail.com or finding a Steering Committee member at the pool.

14. REFEREES (Optional)

As stated in 12 above, the club expects the players to resolve any disputes. The attending players can decide to have one player be a referee for one or more games. That player moves
to poolside and officiates the game. The referee is then the final word on any infractions. Different players can be rotated through the referee position. It will be considered to be unsportsmanlike to dispute or try to influence the ref’s call.

**BEST PRACTICES**

1. Players should make every attempt to arrive on time in order to assist with set-up of equipment and avoid disruption to the game and to the other players. Late arrivals should refrain from entering the water until invited to join the game.

2. Players should stay for the whole playing session. If a player knows that he/she will have to leave the game early, he/she should announce it to the team at the outset. All players should assist in taking down equipment after play.

3. Fitness Club Requirements:
   a) All players must shower prior to entering the pool or entering the Jacuzzi.
   b) Players may not enter the pool or the Jacuzzi wearing any street apparel.
   c) Players must remove all objects (e.g. jewelry) which may cause injury to self or to another player.
   d) Players wearing glasses or lenses during play do so at their own risk.
   e) Players are not allowed to chew gum in the pool.

4. We encourage team play. Continuous infringement on another player’s position is considered unsportsmanlike. Sometimes moving into another player’s space is unavoidable. Each team member will be responsible for playing his/her position and be ready to receive/play the ball.

5. We encourage setting up the ball from the back to all of the front row players.

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

(Available on the website, [www.lhwatervolleyball.com](http://www.lhwatervolleyball.com), and upon request)
1. Logistics
2. Sportsmanship in Water Volleyball
3. Tips to Improve Your Game
4. Training Program and Schedule for Water Volleyball
5. Water Volleyball Ranking Process
6. Water Volleyball Setup, Take-down and Care of Equipment
7. Water Volleyball Attire
8. WVB Rotation for 8 players diagrams
9. WVB Rotation for 12 players diagrams
10. Leave of Absence Guidelines for Competitive Play Levels 4-6
11. Good Sportsmanship Guidelines, Unsportsmanlike Behavior, and Resolving Infraction Disputes