

# Rules and Best Practices

Revised January 14, 2020

**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:** Most of the following are Rules and Best Practices which apply equally to Recreational and Competitive Play

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

This is not an exhaustive set of rules and best practices but should provide the members 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 by 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.

Also, players are expected to make "self-calls" regarding touching the net during live play and touching the ball on hits that are contacted by the opponent that appear to be hit out-of-bounds.

All players are always expected to play and conduct themselves in a sportsmen-like manner.

## TERMINOLOGY

- 1. Block** - Blocking refers to the actions taken by players standing at the net to stop or alter an opponent's attack. A block is performed by jumping and reaching to penetrate with one's arms and hands over the net and into the opponent's area. The jump should be timed to intercept the ball's trajectory prior to it crossing over the net.  
If the defensive player (blocker) has a failed block, and the ball falls on the defensive side of the net, the same player may immediately hit the ball again. The failed block will not count as one of the three hits allowed on their own side. If the ball goes out of bounds on the block, the last player to touch the ball loses the point.
- 2. Catch and Throw (Carry)** - continuous contact with the ball with the absence of a hit for more than 6 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 for

competitive team play (e.g. Recreational Ball Competitive [RBCT] and Levels 4-6).

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

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/Water ball**- when the ball hits the water or floats, results in dead ball.

8. **Hit** - any touch or body contact with the ball.

9. **Net One, Net Two** - the net closest to the locker room doors is designated as Net One, the net at the far end of the pool is Net Two.

10. **Recreational Play** - emphasis on recreation, recreational to all players, played with a lighter ball, where upper level competitive players are encouraged to play but also asked to play at an appropriate level of play to avoid injuries to the other players. RBCT focus will be on competitive play.

11. **Pass** - hitting the ball to a teammate in order to allow that teammate to set the ball. The pass is the first “touch” on the offensive side of the net.

12. **Plane of Net** - any portion of the ball over the vertical plane of the net. In some cases, the ball is “live” for both teams, if any part of the ball is above 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. **Set** - Usually the second “touch” on the offensive side of the net, intended to provide a teammate an opportunity to spike the ball into the defensive side of the net.

18. **Spike/Strike/Attack** - slamming the ball over the net onto the opponents' side of the net. \*

\* See Rules

## RULES

Introduction: This document represents the complete list of rules for our club. No other written rules apply to our club (e.g. USVBA, International Volleyball Federation [FIVB]).

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 (such as touching the net during play) 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 completely 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. **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.**

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 position. 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 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.

Out of Bounds	Inbounds
Side boundary (before hitting the water)	Back boundary line
Any part of the ceiling including the roof, rafters and duct work, excluding any flags or banners	Simultaneously hits the water and side boundary
Edge of the pool including the net structure that sits on the top deck	
Pole on the handicap chair	
Ball lands in the areas beyond the boundary lines	

5. **OVER THE NET:** In both Recreational and Competitive volleyball, reaching beyond the net and interfering with the ball while the opponent is trying to touch the ball 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, including over the vertical plane of the net. This also applies to a second hit attempt on a serve return.

b) When blocking: A blocker may touch the ball beyond the net, if he/she does not interfere with the opponent's play before the opponent's spike. In other words, a blocker can only block an attack hit of the ball from the opponent, which, in some cases, could be an errant set floating over the net.

c) In either case, no contact with the net is permitted. Violating this rule of touching the net shall result in a dead ball, and the offending team loses the point and the serve.

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

6. **BLOCKING:** No blocking is allowed on a serve. A blocker may touch the ball beyond the net, if he/she does not interfere with the opponent's play before the latter's spike. In other words, the blocker must allow the hitter to touch the ball first before he/she blocks the attempted hit.

No contact with any body part, including hands, elbows, head, etc. is permitted with the net during a block, even if the ball is grounded or bounces off the opponent during a block or an attack. The net violation overrides all other plays.

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 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. The offending player shall immediately yell out "NET" and get the attention of both his/her teammates and the opposing team to stop play. Gently grabbing the net and pulling on it is sometimes effective to get players' attention. Long hair touching the net is not a violation. Pulling or pushing the net to have a ball fall on a desired side of the net is not allowed.

9. **CARRYING - CATCH AND THROW** (also known as "holding" or "palming"): When playing the ball, a player's hand must hit/strike 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 with the ball for **more than 6 inches of arm travel**. A carry occurs when:

- There is prolonged contact with the ball as opposed to a ball that rebounds off the player
- The ball changes direction during the player's contact with the ball as opposed to a ball that maintains the direction of the player's initial contact with the ball
- The flight of ball is directed by catching and throwing as opposed to a ball that rebounds off the player
- A player attempts to rescue the ball by changing the direction of the ball through prolonged contact as opposed to striking the ball in the correct direction for the rescue shot
- A player spikes the ball at the net by catching and throwing the ball downward as opposed to striking the ball in the correct direction for the attack shot.
- A player scoops the ball up using two hands with their palms up and causing prolonged contact with the ball as opposed to bumping the ball up using a rebounding contact.

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 (except for RBCT which will play with the red ball).

11. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR**: Unsportsmanlike behavior may result in disciplinary action by the Steering Committee. Examples of unsportsmanlike behavior include the following:

- Negative verbal goading of a player, "put downs" or use of vulgar language.

- Any intentional action that harms another player. For example, an extremely hard spike that hits a non-competitive player is deemed to be unsportsmanlike.
- Hostility on the court is not to be tolerated. Involved parties may be directed to leave the pool and may be invited to take the issue to the Steering Committee.
- Continued movement of the net to influence the fall of a ball.
- Playing without any attempt to set up the ball to others on the team or continuous infringement on another player's position.
- Continuous spiking to a player who does not have the ability to block a spike or continuous serving to a weaker player during Recreational play.

## 12. RESOLVING INFRACTION DISPUTES

The club encourages "Self-Reporting" of a player's infractions (e.g., hitting the net, interference, touching a ball going out of bounds, double hit, water ball, catch and carry). 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.

## 13. 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 has the final word on any infractions. Different players can be rotated through the referee position. It will 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 Jacuzzi.
  - b). Players may not enter the pool or 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 the front row players.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

(Available on the website, [www.lhwatervolleyball.com](http://www.lhwatervolleyball.com), and upon request)

1. Sportsmanship in Water Volleyball
2. Tips to Improve Your Game
3. Training Program and Schedule for Water Volleyball
4. Water Volleyball Ranking Process
5. Water Volleyball Setup, Take-down and Care of Equipment
6. Water Volleyball Attire
7. WVB Rotation for 8 players diagrams
8. WVB Rotation for 12 players diagrams