STONEWALL VOLLEYBALL

Charlotte, NC | Est. 2015

INDOOR VOLLEYBALL

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 SEND QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, ISSUES AND/OR HYPOTHETICALS TO
charlotte.volleyball@stonewallsports.org

OFFICIAL RULES OF THE GAME

Stonewall Volleyball Charlotte will operate under the competition rules and regulations as outlined in the Domestic Competition Rules and Regulations as adopted by USA Volleyball and available at www.usavolleyball.org. The rules below are specific to Stonewall Volleyball Charlotte and supersede the rules in the USA Volleyball handbook.

Section I: Match Time, Scoring, and Number of Sets

1.1. Regular Season

1.1.1. Each match will be played in one full set. The first team to reach 25 points, utilizing rally scoring, is the winner of the contest.

1.1.2. If a match reaches the score of 24-24, the first team to gain a two-point advantage is the winner of the contest (e.g. 26-24, 30-28).

1.1.3. Teams will switch sides when either one of the teams wins their twelfth point.

1.1.4. Matches are scheduled for 20 minutes of playing time. If the match exceeds 30 minutes, volleyball leads reserve the right to expedite the conclusion of the contest.

1.2. Playoffs - Winners' Bracket

1.2.1. Each match in the winners' bracket will be played as a best-of-three set match. The first two sets will be played to 25 points, utilizing rally scoring.

1.2.2. If a team wins the first two sets of the match, that team is the winner of the contest.

1.2.3. If two teams each win one of the first two sets, a third set will be played.

1.2.4. The third set, if necessary, will be played until one team reaches 15 points, utilizing rally scoring.

1.2.5. If a set reaches the score of 24-24 in the first two sets or 14-14 in the third set, the first team to gain a two-point advantage is the winner of the set (e.g. 26-24, 17-15).

1.2.6. If a third set is necessary, the winner of the third set is the winner of the contest.

1.3. Playoffs - Losers' Bracket

1.3.1. Each match will be played in one full set. The first team to reach 25 points, utilizing rally scoring, is the winner of the contest.

1.3.2. If a match reaches the score of 24-24, the first team to gain a two-point advantage is the winner of the contest (e.g. 26-24, 30-28).

1.3.3. Teams will switch sides when either one of the teams wins their twelfth point.

1.3.4. Matches are scheduled for 20 minutes of playing time. If the match exceeds 30 minutes, volleyball leads reserve the right to expedite the conclusion of the contest.

Section II: Team Composition & Attendance

2.1. A team will consist of a minimum of six (6) players and a maximum of ten (10) players, including the Captain.

2.2. If deemed beneficial by volleyball chairs and upper leadership, teams will be divided into divisions; one competitive and one recreational.

2.2.1. These divisions are split based on questions asked upon each player's registration; one question asking players to rate their skill level and one question asking players to rate how competitive they are

2.2.2. For each player, the skill rating and the competitiveness rating are averaged into one number: the skill-competition average (SCA). The SCA for each player on a given team are averaged to find the team skill-competition average (TSCA).

2.2.3. The TSCA for each team determines placement in either the competitive division or the recreational division.

2.2.4. Volleyball leaders and upper leadership then evaluate which teams are placed in each division based on the TSCA of each team.

2.3. A team must have at least four (4) players present at match time. If a team does not have four (4) players, that team will receive a forfeit.

2.4. After the forfeit has been recorded, the teams may choose to play a friendly scrimmage match if both captains agree to play. Any scrimmage match resulting from a forfeit must end at least 5 minutes before the beginning of the next match.

2.5. The team captain should present the lineup to the opposing team at the beginning of each set. The team must maintain this rotational order throughout the set.

2.6. Regular Season & Playoffs - Losers' Bracket: If a player is not present at the time when lineups are exchanged, they may not participate in the match.

2.7. Playoffs - Winners' Bracket: If a player is not present at the time when lineups are exchanged, they cannot play until the next set. The opposing team's captain must be provided an updated lineup. No players can be added after the beginning of set 2.

Section III: The Uniform

3.1. Every player must play all matches wearing their current year Stonewall volleyball shirt.

3.2. In the event that a player does not have their current year Stonewall volleyball shirt, they may not participate in any matches.

3.3. If it is found by or reported to volleyball leads that a player participated in a match without their current year Stonewall volleyball shirt, the team of the player committing the infraction will be issued a forfeit for any and all matches in which the player in question participated.

3.4. Shirts may be modified for comfort, but the Stonewall logo, websites, and any sponsor logos must not be altered or obscured in any way.

3.5. Kneepads and other protective equipment are not required but can be worn as long as it is not a hazard to other players.

Section IV: Referees/Line Judges

4.1. Each team must have at least one (1) head referee and two (2) line judges for all games they are scheduled to referee. Teams may elect to have an additional player operate the scoreboard.

4.2. If a team does not provide the minimum number of referees and line judges for a game that they are scheduled to officiate, a penalty will be incurred in their next match.

4.3. The first time a team misses their scheduled officiating time, they will receive a 10-point penalty in their next set; meaning that they will begin their next match down 10-0 to their opponent.

4.4. If a team misses more than one scheduled officiating time, they will be issued a forfeit for their next set or match.

Section V: Starting the Game

5.1. General

5.1.1. The referee sounds the whistle and signals for service before each serve.

5.1.2. Note: A team will receive only one warning per game for serving before the whistle.

5.1.3. Service may be underhand or overhand.

5.2. Regular Season

5.2.1. The winner of a single Rock, Paper, Scissors game has the choice of service or side of court. The opposing team makes the remaining decision.

5.2.2. Teams change courts when either one of the two teams reaches their twelfth point.

5.3. Playoffs - Winners' Bracket

5.3.1. The winner of a single Rock, Paper, Scissors game has the choice of service or side of court. The opposing team makes the remaining decision.

5.3.2. The team not serving first in the first set shall serve first in the second set.

5.3.3. Service and side of the court will be determined for the third set and will be determined by an additional game of Rock, Paper, Scissors.

5.3.4. Teams change courts after the first set.

5.4. Playoffs - Losers' Bracket

5.4.1. The winner of a single Rock, Paper, Scissors game has the choice of service or side of court. The opposing team makes the remaining decision.

5.4.2. Teams change courts when either one of the two teams reaches their twelfth point.

Section VI: Substitutions

6.1. There is no limit on the number of players permitted to substitute at one time.

6.2. There is no limit on the number of times a player may enter and re-enter the game, but they may only play and re-enter in the same rotation order listed at the beginning of the game.

6.2.1. If service order is not maintained, the team committing the infraction will forfeit all points won from the moment the rotation was broken to the moment the infraction was found to be made.

6.3. If a player is injured and there are no remaining eligible substitutes in that serving spot, then the opposing team must pick a substitute from a different serving spot on the injured player's team to take that spot in the line-up.

6.4. Bleeding players, or players with blood on their uniform, must be replaced.

Section VII: Playing the Ball

7.1. Hitting the Ball

7.1.1. A legal hit is contact with the ball by the hands or arms which does not allow the ball to come to rest even momentarily.

7.1.2. The ball must be clearly hit: throwing, lifting, or shoving the ball are illegal.

7.1.3. A team has three hits to return the ball over the net.

7.1.4. One player may not hit the ball twice in succession

7.1.5. Simultaneous contact by two or more players on the same team is considered one play, and any player is eligible to play the ball again.

7.2. Positioning

7.2.1. Positions: Players are free to position themselves, there are NO determined positions on the court as long as the service order is maintained

7.3. Rotation

3.1.1. Six Person Competition Only: When the receiving team has gained the right to serve, that team's players must rotate one position clockwise.

7.4. . Rotation Fault

4.1.1. Six Person Competition Only: A rotation fault is committed when the service is not made according to the rotation order. The error is corrected, and the serving team is penalized with the loss of rally.

7.5. Service:

7.5.1. Service order must be maintained throughout the set

5.1.1. If service order is not maintained, the team committing the infraction will forfeit all points won from the moment the rotation was broken to the moment the infraction was discovered.

7.5.2. Only one toss or release of the ball is allowed. The server must hit the ball within 5 seconds after the 1st referee whistles for service.

7.5.3. The server may move freely within the service zone. At the moment of service hit or take-off for a jump service, the server must not touch the court. His/her foot may not go under or touch the endline.

7.6. Consecutive Contact

7.6.1. A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively

7.6.2. At the first hit of the team, provided it is not made overhand with fingers, consecutive contacts are permitted provided that the contacts occur during one action. During the first hit of the team if it is played overhand using fingers, the ball may NOT contact the fingers/hands consecutively, even if the contacts occur during one action.

7.6.3. When blocking, consecutive contacts may be made by one or more players, provided that they occur during one action

7.7. Blocking:

7.7.1. Blocking is the action of players close to the net to intercept the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net.

7.7.2. To block an opponent's service is forbidden.

7.7.3. When blocking, a player may touch the ball beyond the net, provided that he/she does not interfere with the opponent's play before or during the attack-hit.

7.7.4. After an attack-hit, 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.

7.7.5. If two opponents simultaneously contact the ball above the net, the ball remains in play, and the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits.

7.7.6. If the ball lands out of bounds, it is the fault of the team opposite the net from where the ball lands.

7.7.7. The ball is allowed to hit the net while traveling over the net, this includes on the serve.

7.8. Net Contact and Encroachment

7.8.1. A player may not touch ANY part of the net while the ball is in play.

7.8.2. A player may not make contact beyond the center line of play onto the opponent's side of the court.

Section VIII: Interruptions

8.1. Game interruption is at the discretion of the officials.

8.2. The replaying of rallies is at the discretion of the officials.

8.3. If captains disagree with a play stoppage or replay of a rally called by an official, they may request intervention from the volleyball leads.

8.4. Each team may request a maximum of one time-out per set. All requested time-outs last for 30 seconds.

8.5. If a ball from a neighboring court enters the play area, play will be stopped ONLY if it is judged to be a hazard to active play. The rally will be replayed.

8.6. If a team audibly signals to the opposing team and/or the officials that a ball from a neighboring court has entered the play area, the rally will be replayed, only if verified by the officials that the ball presented a hazard to the players on the court during active play.

8.7. Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, the referee must stop the game immediately and permit medical assistance. The rally will be replayed.

8.8. An injured player is given a maximum of 5 minutes recovery time. If a player is unable to return to play at the conclusion of recovery time, they are ineligible to return during that match.

Section IX: Misconduct

9.1. Any challenges in officiating must be communicated by the captain or acting captain of the team.

9.2. If a disagreement persists or a rule interpretation is needed, captains and/or officials can request intervention from the volleyball leads.

9.3. During the game, if a player or players exhibit any behavior that breaches a rule of the league or the Stonewall Sports organization, verbal warnings and/or removal from the match can be issued by the game's referee.

9.4. Warnings will be issued in 3 stages:

9.4.1. Verbal warning to the Captain (report to Volleyball Officer immediately)

9.4.2. Individual removed from the set by the Volleyball Officer but may return the following set (report to Volleyball Officer immediately)

9.4.3. Written team forfeiture/default issued by Volleyball Officer

Section X: Amendments to the Rules

10.1. Stonewall Leadership reserves the right to make any edits to the rules that are necessary and proper for fair and safe gameplay.

10.2. Any changes to the rule made within the season will be communicated with captains of all teams with a suitable timeline for implementation.

Section XI: Stonewall Sports Guideline Adherence

11.1. All Stonewall Sports rules, policies, and guidelines listed in the organization's rules and guidelines, if not listed here shall be followed.

Summary of Rule Changes from 2025 → 2026

SECTION I — Match Time, Scoring, Sets

- Major Structural Changes
  - Number of Sets
    - Old: All matches were best-of-three during the season.
    - New: Regular season = ONE 25-point set only (win by two).
  - Time Limit
    - Old: 40-minute match limit.
    - New: Matches scheduled for 20 minutes, with authority to expedite if over 30 minutes.
  - Switching Sides
    - Old: Teams switched sides after Set 1 (and at 8 points in third set).
    - New: Switch sides at 12 points during regular season & losers' bracket matches.
- Playoffs
  - Double Elimination Tournament
    - Winners' bracket now follows best-of-three (similar to old rules).
    - Losers' bracket uses one-set matches, same as regular season.

SECTION II — Team Composition & Attendance

- Roster Size
  - Old: Min 6, max 12.
  - New: Min 6, max 10.
- New Division System
  - This did not exist in old rules:
  - Introduction of competitive & recreational divisions.
  - Placement determined by:
    - Player skill rating
    - Player competitiveness rating
    - Averaged into SCA → TSCA
    - Leadership evaluates division placement.
- Minimum Players to Avoid Forfeit
  - Old: Must have 6 to start.
  - New: Must have 4.
- Late-Arriving Players
  - Old: If not present at lineup exchange, cannot play until next set; no adds after start of set 2.
  - New: Regular season & losers' bracket: If not present for lineup exchange, may not play at all in that match.
  - Winners' bracket: Same as old rule — cannot play until next set.
- Removed Rules
  - Old rule specifying "no players added after beginning of set 2" is now playoff-specific only.

SECTION III — Uniform

- Much Stricter Enforcement
    - Old: Must begin play in Stonewall shirt, but no penalty beyond removal.
    - New: If a player participates without the official shirt → forfeit for every match they played in.
- Players cannot participate at all without official shirt.

SECTION IV — Referees / Line Judges

- New Penalties
    - Old rules: No penalties, only requirement to have refs.
    - New rule: If a team misses their officiating assignment:
        - 1st offense: Start next match down 10–0.
        - 2nd offense: Automatic forfeit of next set/match.
- New Option Added
    - Teams may provide an additional player to run the scoreboard.

SECTION V — Starting the Game

- Regular Season Changes
    - Old: Teams switched courts after the first set.
    - New: Only one set, so switching occurs when a team reaches 12 points.
- Playoff Clarifications
    - Winners' bracket rules clarified more explicitly, but content largely similar to old rules.
    - Losers' bracket mirrors new regular season rules.

SECTION VI — Substitutions

- Additions
    - New explicit rule: If service order is broken, all points earned during the illegal rotation are forfeited.
    - Clarified language about rotation maintenance.

SECTION VII — Playing the Ball

- Most rules remain the same but reorganized for clarity.
- Notable Changes
    - Net & encroachment broken into its own subsection.
    - Clarified service-order violation consequences (matches substitution section).
    - More explicit language about rally replays & hazards.

SECTION VIII — Interruptions

- New Additions
    - Captains may request intervention from volleyball leads if they disagree with stoppage/replay decisions.
    - Additional clarification: rallies are replayed only if officials determine the foreign ball was a hazard.

SECTION IX — Misconduct

- New Additions
    - Official challenges must come from captains only.
    - Explicit path for escalation to volleyball leads for rule interpretation disputes.
    - Adjusted Penalties
    - Old rule “paper forfeit” now worded as written team forfeiture/default.

SECTION X — Amendments to Rules

- Completely new section.
- Leadership may modify rules mid-season but must notify captains with appropriate timing.

SECTION XI — Stonewall Guideline Adherence

- Also new — explicit cross-reference to follow all Stonewall Sports national policies even if not stated here.

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1. Match Time and Number of Sets

1.1. Each match will be played as the best of 3 sets. The first two sets of a match will be played to 25, utilizing rally scoring.

1.1.1. If a third set is necessary, it will be played to 15 utilizing rally scoring.

1.2. The first team in a set to score 25 points (or 15 in the third set) will be the winner of that set.

1.2.1. Teams will change sides at the completion of the 1st set. If a 3rd deciding set is necessary, teams will switch sides after the first team reaches 8 points.

1.3. If the set score reaches 24-24 (or 14-14 in the third set), the first team to reach a two-point advantage (e.g.26-24 or 19-17) will be the winner of that set.

1.4. Matches are limited to 40 minutes of playing time.

1.5. If a match reaches the time limit before the completion of the deciding set, the teams will finish the current set. If the conclusion of that set does not determine the winner of the match (a 1-1 match score), then the third set will be played, but the score needed to win the set will be reduced to 10 and no game interruptions will be permitted (including substitutions).

2. Team Composition

2.1. A team will consist of a minimum of six (6) players and a maximum of twelve (12) players, including the Captain.

2.2. A team must have at least six (6) players present at match time.

2.2.1. If a team does not have six (6) players, that team will receive a forfeit.

2.3. After the forfeit has been recorded, the teams may choose to play a friendly scrimmage match if both captains agree to play.

2.3.1. Any scrimmage match resulting from a forfeit must end at least 5 minutes before the beginning of the next match.

2.4. The team captain should present the lineup to the opposing team at the beginning of each set. The team must maintain this rotational order throughout the set.

2.5. If a player is not present at the time when lineups are exchanged, they cannot play until the next set. The opposing team's captain must be provided an updated lineup. No players can be added after the beginning of set 2.

3. The Uniform

3.1. Every player must begin play with the current Stonewall volleyball shirt.

3.2. Shirts may be modified for comfort, but the Stonewall logo, websites, and any sponsor logos must not be altered or obscured in any way.

3.3. Kneepads other protective equipment are not required but can be worn as long as it is not a hazard to other players.

4. Referees/Line Judges

4.1. Each team must have at least one (1) head referee and two (2) line judges for all games they are scheduled to referee.

5. Starting the game

5.1. The winner of single Rock, Paper, Scissors game has the choice of service or side of court. The opposing team makes the remaining decision.

5.2. The team not serving first in the first game shall serve first in the second game.

5.3. Service and side of the court will be determined for the third game and will be determined by an additional game of Rock, Paper, Scissors.

5.4. Teams change courts after the first game.

5.5. The referee sounds the whistle and signals for service before each serve.

5.5.1. Note: A team will receive only one warning per game for serving before the whistle.

5.6. Service may be underhand or overhand.

6. Substitutions

6.1. No change will be made in the position of other players when substitutions are made.

6.2. There is no limit on the number of players permitted to substitute at onetime.

6.3. There is no limit on the number of times a player may enter and re-enter the game, but they may only play and re-enter in the same rotation order listed at the beginning of the game.

6.4. If a player is injured and there are no remaining eligible substitutes in that serving spot, then the opposing team must pick a substitute from a different serving spot on the injured player's team to take that spot in the line-up.

6.4.1. Bleeding players, or players with blood on their uniform, must be replaced.

7. Playing the Ball

7.1. A legal hit is contact with the ball by the hands or arms which does not allow the ball to come to rest even momentarily.

7.2. The ball must be clearly hit: throwing, lifting, or shoving the ball are illegal.

7.3. A team has three hits to return the ball over the net.

7.4. One player may not hit the ball twice in succession

7.5. Simultaneous contact by two or more players on the same team is considered one play, and any player is eligible to play the ball again.

7.6. Positions: Players are free to position themselves, there are NO determined positions on the court

7.7. **Service**:

7.7.1. Service order must be maintained throughout the set

7.7.2. When the receiving team has gained the right to serve, its players do not have to rotate positions

7.7.3. Only one toss or release of the ball is allowed. The server must hit the ball within 5 seconds after the 1st referee whistles for service.

7.7.4. The server may move freely within the service zone. At the moment of service hit or take-off for a jump service, the server must not touch the court. His/her foot may not go under or touch the endline.

7.8. **Consecutive Contact**: A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively

7.8.1. At the first hit of the team, provided it is not made overhand with fingers, consecutive contacts are permitted provided that the contacts occur during one action. During the first hit of the team if it is played overhand using fingers, the ball may NOT contact the fingers/hands consecutively, even if the contacts occur during one action.

7.8.2. When blocking, consecutive contacts may be made by one of more players, provided that they occur during one action

7.9. **Blocking**:

7.9.1. Blocking is the action of players close to the net to intercept the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net.

7.9.2. To block an opponent's service is forbidden.

7.9.3. In blocking, a player may touch the ball beyond the net, provided that he/she does not interfere with the opponent's play before or during the attack-hit.

7.9.4. After an attack-hit, 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.

7.10. If two opponents simultaneously contact the ball above the net, the ball remains in play, and the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits.

7.10.1. If the ball lands out of bounds, it is the fault of the team opposite the net from where the ball lands.

7.11. The ball is allowed to hit the net while traveling over the net, this includes on the serve.

7.12. A player may not touch ANY part of the net while the ball is in play.

7.13. A player may not make contact beyond the center line of play onto the opponent's side of the court.

8. Interruptions

8.1. Each team may request a maximum of one time-out per set. All requested time-outs last for 30 seconds.

8.2. If a ball from a neighboring court enters the play area, play will be stopped ONLY if it is judged to be a hazard to active play. Game interruption is at the discretion of the officials. The rally will be replayed.

8.3. Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, the referee must stop the game immediately and permit medical assistance. The rally will be replayed.

8.3.1. An injured player is given a maximum of 5 minutes recovery time. If a player is unable to return to play at the conclusion of recovery time, they are ineligible to return during that match.

9. Misconduct

9.1. During the game, if a player(s) exhibits any behavior that breaches a rule of the league or the Stonewall Sports organization, verbal warnings and/or removal from the match can be issued by the game's referee.

9.2. Warnings will be issued in 3 stages:

9.2.1. Verbal warning to the Captain (report to Volleyball Officer immediately)

9.2.2. Individual removed from the set by the Volleyball Officer but may return the following set (report to Volleyball Officer immediately)

9.2.3. Paper forfeit issued by Volleyball Officer

Change Log

Changes made to the Official League Rules are in **bold** font. Text in ~~**bold with a strikethrough**~~ indicates that part of the rule has been removed.

Season	Changes or Updates
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