



2025-26 NFHS Volleyball Points of Emphasis

Lineup Card

The second referee's lineup card is an optional tool to record each team's lineup. It is the choice of the second referee to verify each team's starting lineup prior to each set by using the coaches' submitted lineup sheets or the second referee's lineup card. Some second referees use the lineup card to assist with rotations/positional faults, substitutions/libero replacements, time-outs and to quickly check the next server. It is recommended for newer officials that are less familiar with the game to use the lineup card as a tool to learn how to track rotations. Veteran officials or those who are more familiar with identifying players and rotations through memorization, opposites or patterns, may choose not to use the lineup card.

Mechanics:

- Lineups must be checked at the beginning of each set by the second referee and the scorer.
- If a second referee chooses to use a lineup card, the starters must be noted, and it is the official's choice to record any additional information.
- When a substitute is requested (by the coach or by the player entering the sub zone), the second referee recognizes a substitute, one at a time, by whistling two short blasts, signaling substitution and showing the authorization to enter signal.
- If using a lineup card, the second referee records the substitution and turns slightly at an angle to ensure that the scorer has recorded the substitution as well.
- If the lineup card is not being used, the second referee simply authorizes the entry and turns slightly at an angle and ensures that the scorer has recorded the substitution.
- Scorers have their way of acknowledging that the entry was made into the scorebook. This should be discussed pre-match with the score crew.
- Immediately following the acknowledgment from the scorer, the second referee turns, takes their position on the receiving team's side of the court and signals the ready to play signal to the first referee.
- If each team has a substitute(s), the second referee should hold their hand up to indicate to that substitute to wait until the second referee has completed the opposing team's request and entry. Regardless of the method, using a lineup card or not, communication with the scorers is crucial in pre-match and during the match to ensure the players are in correct service order.

Ball Handling

Volleyball remains a rebound sport allowing players to play the ball with any part of the body. The sport continues to grow in popularity, with an annual increase in the number of participants and spectators. The inconsistency in judgment of contacts from one official to another and from one player to another causes anxiety for all parties. As the sport has evolved, the rules have adapted to allow multiple contacts on the ball with the caveat that the first referee should only judge the length of time on a body part, whistling a catch/throw or illegal contact, along with the number of contacts made on the same attempt by one player. With the 2025 rules changes, officials no longer adjudicate the multiple contact fault on a second contact when the ball is played to a teammate. What this means for high school volleyball is:

- More play, less whistles.
- Less controversy between coaches (players) and referees.
- A team whose second contact to a teammate is a “double,” is allowed one more contact to play the ball over the net.
- Less concern about the consistency of officials between sets/matches and from player to player (setter or non-setter).

Related Mechanics:

- The first referee still needs to be diligent about judging multiple contacts **IF** the ball is contacted by the opponent first, not a teammate. (A double hit, with a slightly delayed whistle)
- The first referee must be prepared to whistle a double contact **IF** the second team contact completely crosses the plane of the net. (A double hit, with a slightly delayed whistle)
- The first referee must continue to call any third contact that is “doubled.”
- The first referee will continue to allow the first ball double that travels over the net.

R1 Assigning LJs

For those states who have selected to remain on the same side of the court throughout the match, the default is for line judges to switch sides of the court between sets to allow for equitable adjudication of the lines. There may be a situation in which the first referee requires line judges to remain on the same side throughout the match. Rule 5-4-1g provides the first referee the authority to do so in order to create the best environment for match administration. First referees may make line judge position assignments based on experience of line judges, level and type of play by one or both teams, and/or observed performance. The authority of the first referee should not be used to prejudge line judges or create an unfair environment for either team. Any divergence from the default line judge positioning should be communicated with both head coaches.

Uniforms – Contrasting Colors

The NFHS Volleyball Rules not only require the libero jersey to clearly contrast from the team jersey, but also the body of the uniform number must clearly contrast from the uniform top. These rules are in place to assist officials in easily identifying the libero as well as player numbers. When the ball and players are on the move, officials must clearly see the libero’s positioning when playing the ball as well as player numbers when watching for net, line, and attack faults. There are infinite color shades and combinations that schools around the country use which makes it very difficult to create rules defining which colors contrast with each other. It is important to emphasize the word “clearly.” The colors should be obviously contrasting from one another in all types of gym lighting when viewing from the floor and the top of the bleachers.

Tips for selecting color combinations:

- If the jersey color is dark, the color of the number should be light or even white.
- If the jersey color is light or white, the color of the number should be dark or even black.
- If the team jersey color is dark, the libero jersey color should be light or even white.
- If the team jersey color is light or white, the libero jersey color should be dark or even black.
- Avoid too many colors on the team jersey as it limits the colors for a legal libero jersey and the uniform numbers.