

New Volleyball Rules for the 2026-2027 School Season

Learning Guide for Coaches, Athletes & Spectators

For the 2026/27 season, three new rules and one emphasized existing rule are now active.

To foster a constructive athletic experience, we ask all participants—including players, coaches, referees, and spectators—to familiarize themselves with these updates. Growth involves a learning curve, and mistakes are a natural part of the game for athletes, coaches, and officials alike. Let's work together to model proper behavior, lead with respect, and maintain an encouraging atmosphere for everyone involved.



2026-27 Indoor Volleyball

Rules, Application & Interpretation

Clear summary of the Volleyball Canada updates

This guide translates Volleyball Canada's published 2026-27 change summary into clear, on-court language for referees, coaches, athletes and organizations.

AT A GLANCE



Internal Pass / Double Contact

Second-contact overhand finger doubles are not punished when made during one action and the ball stays on the same side.

NEW



Ceiling Contact

First or second team contact may remain playable after contacting the ceiling / attached overhead infrastructure above the field of play.

NEW



'Tip' Attack

VC clarifies what makes a one-handed tip legal: no push, carry, catch or throw; short contact; straight-line action.

EMPHASIS



Two-Handed Attacks

VC clarifies how two-handed actions over the net are judged, including the difference between an attack hit and a legal blocking action.

NEW



How to use this guide: each topic shows the official VC position first, then a plain-language on-court explanation. The Volleyball Canada rulebook and published change summary remain the governing sources.



Internal Pass / Double Contact

Rule text is unchanged; the application for the second team contact is clarified.



Volleyball Canada states:

During internal passes (second contact), double contacts made with an overhand finger action will not be punished, if made during one action and the ball remains on the same side of the court.

However, double contacts made during completed attack hits (completely crossing the plane of the net or contacting the opponent block) will be called as faults.

VC: Rule text specific to double contact is unchanged.

WHAT THIS MEANS ON COURT

- ✓ **First team contact** Existing first-contact rules remain unchanged.
- ✓ **Second team contact** An overhand finger double during one action is allowed when the ball remains on the same team's side.
- ✓ **Completed attack hit** If that double-contacted ball completely crosses the net plane or contacts the opponent block, it is a fault.



PLAY CONTINUES

- Second team contact.
- Overhand finger action.
- One playing action.
- Ball remains on the same side.



WHISTLE A FAULT

- Second-contact double becomes a completed attack hit.
- Ball completely crosses the net plane, or
- Ball contacts the opponent block.

A Fault is not called until the above criteria is met. Allow time when the ball leaves the hands for those to occur.

We have to consider that the strict guidelines placed on setters are unrealistic compared to other sports. A bad throw from a quarterback does not end a play in football, and a missed shot from a shooting guard does not constitute a whistle in basketball. That throw and shot can still be recovered by teammates, and something can be made of the errant ball.

By allowing flexibility for a less than ideal set, it promotes rallies, encourages youth athletes to keep setting, and provides opportunities for spectacular plays.

Optimal setting and techniques will still be desirable and practiced by teams who strive for high performance.





Ceiling Contact

The rule text changed, and VC now provides a full application / interpretation.

WHAT CHANGED IN RULE 8.4.2?

2025

8.4.2 included **"the ceiling"** as an automatic ball-out contact.

2026

8.4.2 removes **"the ceiling"** from the list of automatic ball-out contacts.

DEFINING "FIELD OF PLAY" FOR THIS GUIDE

FIELD OF PLAY

↓ PLAYING AREA

Playing Area = Playing Court + Free Zone

The Free Zone includes the service zones.
For ceiling-contact application, visualize the **Playing Area** extending vertically upward to the ceiling / overhead structure.



HOW TO APPLY IT

PLAY CONTINUES

First or second team hit contacts the ceiling or infrastructure **directly attached to the ceiling** above the Playing Area, and the ball remains available for the same team's next contact.

OUT - OPPONENT COURT

After contacting the ceiling / directly ceiling-attached infrastructure above the Playing Area, the ball rebounds into the opponent's court.

OUT - OUTSIDE PLAYING AREA

The ball contacts the ceiling / ceiling-attached infrastructure at a point that is **not vertically above the Playing Area**.

OUT - WALL / WALL-MOUNTED

The VC ceiling exception applies to the ceiling and infrastructure directly attached to it. For this guide, contact with a **wall or wall-mounted structure** is treated as out.

SCHOOL-GYM EXAMPLE

A basketball backboard / support mounted to a wall remains a wall-mounted object, even if the structure raises upward close to the ceiling. BUT *if it is attached to the ceiling above the Playing Area, then it is considered in play.*

The ball is permitted to rebound and hit the roof multiple times, as long as it does not stop motion, it can still be recovered. Only when it crosses the plane of the net do faults come into play.

With varying venues and spaces our athletes participate in, this rule is being introduced to allow for flexibility in ball recovery. Opportunity to recover balls on one's own side of the playing space will allow for longer rallies and exciting plays. The impact to the game will be minimal dependent on venue.



Ball-Handling Interpretations

VC provides additional interpretation for tip attacks and two-handed actions.

'PUSH-CARRY-CATCH-THROW' TIP



Rule 9.2.2

The ball must not be caught and/or thrown. It can rebound in any direction.

VC explains that a legal tip is a one-handed attack where the ball is not caught or thrown, the direction changes only once during the action, and contact is short in time and distance.

NO

Push / Carry / Catch /
Throw

1

ONE HAND

SHORT

SHORT CONTACT

LINE

STRAIGHT LINE

Fault indicators: the ball does not instantly rebound; the hand accompanies the ball; the ball is thrown from the palm; or its direction changes more than once.

Emphasis on the Catch & Throw is the goal of the season. Coaches & Athletes should begin practicing proper techniques, and cleaning up some of those techniques that have become problematic.

Referees are to make every effort to be sure balls are not caught or thrown, where teams are gaining an advantage.

Remember, that catches and throws are not based on hand position, but rather called based on duration and quality of contact.

A blue circle with the word "TIP" in white capital letters, centered within a white square.

TIP

TWO HANDED ATTACKS

2H

THE KEY QUESTION: WHERE DID THE BALL COME FROM?

This distinction determines whether the action may be judged as a legal block or as an attack hit.

FROM THE OPPONENT'S SIDE

A ball coming from the opponent's side may be legally blocked.

This includes a ball rebounding off the opponent's block.

FROM YOUR TEAM'S OWN SIDE

A ball coming from a team's own side - including a rebound off its own block - is considered an **attack hit** when directed toward the opponent's court.

Rule 14.1.1 - Blocking

"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..."

Plain-language takeaway: A legal blocking action requires the ball to be coming from the opponent. A ball from your own team's side directed toward the opponent's court is an attack hit - not a block.

SEPARATE TWO-HANDED ACTION

A deliberate two-handed attack hit is a fault. A two-handed overhead pass (setting action) sent over the net may be legal; a fault depends on the quality of the contact.

Two handed attacks (that are not an overhand pass/a set with the fingertips) are to be addressed as a fault.

Keeping in mind that the referee is required to judge if these are an offensive (attack), or defensive action (block/interception). Each play is unique, and judgement must be used in each.

2H

Video Resources for Ball Handling

ILLEGAL

[Illegal 'Push-Carry-Catch-Throw' Tip Actions](#)

LEGAL

[Legal 'Push-Carry-Catch-Throw' Tip Actions](#)

Please keep in mind that ball handling is judgement. Referees have the ability to judge and apply the rules based on what they observed in the rally and the subsequent actions.

Not all judgement will be accurate, but behaviour and reaction to judgement must be handled respectfully and through the game captain.

Please Remember

- These are Kids
- This is a Game
- Coaches are Volunteers
- Referees are Human

**RESPECT THE GAME AND
ALL THE PARTICIPANTS**