

After distributing our last newsletter on simultaneous contact scenarios, we received questions from referees and coaches who mistakenly believe that ANY situation involving simultaneous contact is no longer a fault. As a reminder, the simultaneous contact situations that are now “no fault” involve simultaneous contact with an attacker and blocker during an attack-hit.

Below are some other common simultaneous contact situations that are still a fault.

SIMULTANEOUS CONTACT SCENARIOS – STILL A FAULT

- A Libero uses a finger pass in the front zone and sets a ball that remains on the setter’s side (not in the plane of net). While the ball is higher than the top of the net, it is simultaneously contacted by an attacker and blocker.
 - This is STILL A FAULT. The Libero is called for an illegal attack since the attack-hit was completed when the blocker legally contacted the ball.
- A Libero uses a finger pass in the front zone and sets a ball that is completely higher than the top of the net when it is simultaneously contacted by an attacker and blocker in the plane of the net.
 - This is STILL A FAULT. This situation follows the same interpretation as a situation where the ball is simultaneously contacted on the attacking team’s side. If the ball enters the plane of the net and is simultaneously contacted by the attacker and the blocker, the attack-hit has been completed and results in an illegal attack caused by the Libero’s finger pass while in the front zone.
- A back-row setter is setting a ball that is completely higher than the top of the net, and a blocker reaches beyond the net and contacts the ball simultaneously with the back-row setter while the ball is completely on the setter’s side (not in the plane of net).
 - This is STILL A FAULT, and the *blocker* is called for illegally reaching beyond the net. Blockers may not contact the ball beyond the net before an opponent has executed an attack hit (14.3). Blocking beyond the net on the attacking team’s side is only permitted during an attack-hit.
- A back-row setter is setting a ball that is completely higher than the top of the net, and a blocker contacts the ball simultaneously with the back-row setter while the ball is in the plane of net.
 - This is STILL A FAULT, and the *setter* is called for a back-row block. A back-row setter reaching higher than the top of the net is still at risk of committing a back-row fault if there is simultaneous contact in the plane of the net.

PROTEST SITUATIONS

SITUATION 1: The Team A coach asks to protest the 1st referee's decision that a ball on the court did not interfere with play. The 1st referee attempts to deny the protest and informs the team it is a judgment call and could result in a red card to the coach if the protest is accepted. The coach insists on protesting, and the 1st referee calls for the protest committee. When the protest committee convenes, the coach says he wants to withdraw the protest.

RULING: The protest committee talks to the 1st referee and asks about the nature of the protest. If the committee confirms with the 1st referee that the coach was informed it was a judgment call and was reminded that a red card could be assessed, the committee issues a red card to the coach. Once the protest committee convenes, it is too late for the coach to withdraw a protest related to a judgment decision. The coach is informed that the opportunity to withdraw the protest was when the 1st referee told them it was a judgment decision that could result in a red card, and the coach chose to protest anyway.

SITUATION 2: The Team A coach asks to protest the 1st referee's decision that an attack by a back-row player was legal because the ball was not completely higher than the top of the net when the player contacted the ball. The 1st referee attempts to deny the protest and informs the team it is a judgment call and could result in a red card to the coach if the protest is accepted. The coach insists on protesting, and the 1st referee calls for the protest committee. After waiting several minutes for the protest committee to arrive, the coach chooses to withdraw the protest before the protest committee convenes.

RULING: The 1st referee allows the coach to withdraw the protest, and the team is issued a delay sanction. A coach may choose to withdraw a protest after it has been accepted, but coaches should not be permitted to use protesting as a delay tactic when the 1st referee has informed them the protest was based on a judgment decision. If the withdrawal of the protest happens quickly, the 1st referee may choose to issue a delay warning only. However, if the withdrawal does not occur in a reasonable amount of time, as noted in the situation above, the 1st referee issues a delay warning and a delay penalty due to the length of time the match was delayed.

SITUATION 3: The Team A coach asks to protest the 1st referee's interpretation of a fault involving simultaneous contact because the coach believes simultaneous contact never results in a fault. The 1st referee accepts the protest and calls for the protest committee. After waiting several minutes for the protest committee to arrive, the coach chooses to withdraw the protest because she does not want to continue waiting.

RULING: The 1st referee allows the coach to withdraw the protest, and play continues. If the 1st referee acknowledges that the coach's protest is valid, the coach may choose to withdraw the protest and accept the 1st referee's interpretation of the rule.

USAV BALL HANDLING RULES HAVE NOT CHANGED!

The NCAA recently released information that the double contact rule will change for the 2024 FALL collegiate season. The corresponding USA Volleyball rule **has not changed** and will remain in effect for the entire 2024 season. The current USAV rules regarding double contacts state:

9.1.1: Consecutive Contacts: A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively (except Rules 9.2.3, 14.2 and 14.4.2). (see also 9.2.3, 14.2, 14.4.2)

9.2 Characteristics of the Hit

9.2.1: The ball may touch any part of the body.

9.2.2: The ball must not be caught and/or thrown. It can rebound in any direction. (see also 9.3.3; diagram 11-Signal 6)

9.2.3: The ball may touch various parts of the body, provided that the contacts take place simultaneously.

Exceptions:

9.2.3.1: at blocking, consecutive contacts may be made by one or more player(s), provided that the contacts occur during one action;

*9.2.3.2: at the **first** hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action. (see also 14.1.1, 14.2)*

9.3 Faults in Playing The Ball

9.3.3: CATCH: the ball is caught and/or thrown; it does not rebound from the hit.

*9.3.4: **DOUBLE CONTACT: a player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body in succession.** (see also 9.2.3; diagram 11-Signal 17)*

Under USAV rules, we are still calling double contacts!

We should be judging a finger pass (a “set”) as we always have been. If we see two contacts, it should be called. The rule has only changed for women’s NCAA competitions starting this fall. We should not tell coaches and teams that the “double” is no longer called. This could lead to a protest.

Additionally, please note that the USAV ball handling guidelines have not changed either. Only the most obvious doubles should be called, as stated in the USA Volleyball rules book, page 19:

BALL HANDLING GUIDELINES

In accordance with the spirit of the rules and to encourage longer rallies and spectacular actions, only the most obvious violations will be whistled. Therefore, when a player is not in a very good position to play the ball, the 1st referee will be less severe in his/her judgment of ball handling faults. For example: 1) A player running to play the ball or forced to make a very quick action to reach the ball in order to set. 2) A player is forced to run or make very quick actions to play a ball after it has rebounded from the block or from another player. 3) The first team contact may be freely made except if the player catches or throws the ball.

We can allow play to continue for more difficult plays or quick actions to play the ball. Spin does not automatically result in a fault; USA Volleyball rules should be applied as written.

Questions can be directed to: Bill Stanley, USAV Indoor Rules Interpreter (vbinterp@usav.org)