

2018 NFHS Points of Emphasis for Volleyball

By NFHS on March 05, 2018

Safety of Referee Stands

As Rule 3-1-6 states, a safe and stable platform for the first referee is required game equipment for the administration of every volleyball match. It is a shared responsibility to ensure the safety of our officials. Safe and stable platforms begin with careful assembly and attention to manufacturer guidelines by school athletic departments or event host management. It continues with proper inspection by the first referee prior to each match. The inspection should include height adjustments as mentioned in rule 3-1-6, but should also include inspection of the steps, attachment of the stand to the pole and proper installation as designed by the manufacturer to prevent any injuries to officials, players or fans. Officials should report any safety concerns to host management before the start of the match. Risk minimization is a team effort – proper care and installation by host management and thorough inspection by the first referee.

Warm-Up Safety

Risk minimization continues to be a priority for the NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee. Though volleyball continues to have one of the lowest injury rates of the 22 high school sports under surveillance, the growing number of concussions occurring during warm-ups as reported annually by the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance System (High School RIO) has increased awareness regarding warm-up procedures before and during the match. It is imperative that each coach and state association examine their pre-game warm-up protocols to ensure best practices for prevention of not only concussions, but other injuries, as well. Some things to consider when establishing best practices are: facility space, shared court time, placement of athletes and those assisting with warm-ups, and familiarity of all team members with the warm-up procedures for the match. In addition to pre-game warm-ups, it should be noted that warming up between sets is allowed. Rule 11-5-3 clarifies that teams must remain on their side of the net, in their playable area. No hitting or serving is allowed and volleyballs may be used only on their own side of the playing area.

Treatment of Line Judges

It is a core belief of the NFHS that student participation in education-based high school athletics and activities promotes respect, integrity and sportsmanship. Respect includes, but is not limited to, respect for self, country, school, the sport and all other participants. Consequently, it is the responsibility of coaches to teach and model respectful behavior in the way they treat all contest personnel. It is especially relevant that coaches model and teach respect for those who officiate the game, including line judges. Line judges may be paid contest officials, but many times are parents or even student-athletes serving as a volunteer on the officiating crew. Respect should be shown for line judges by bench personnel, fans, and coaches. Line judges (sanctioned or volunteers) are considered officials of the game. Line judges are not to be heckled, spoken to with defamatory comments or maligned in any way. Lack of respect toward line judges, or other officials, is cause for an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty.

Net Fault Signal Mechanics

Uniformity of signals given by officials allows for a better understanding of the game by coaches, players and fans. It also lends itself to a demonstration of professionalism by officials. When an official is signaling the number of a player who has committed a violation, the signal should be given using the hand on the side at fault, if the number to be given is five or less. If the number is greater than five, the right hand is the base hand. For double digit numbers, the first digit is shown with the right or both hands, and the second digit with left or both hands. The number should not be indicated by reaching across the body to the side at fault, but rather the official should step to the side at fault and present the number, if the number is larger than five. If the number is less than 5, the right or left hand may be used, dependent upon which hand is on the side at fault. As the universal language of officials, consistency in signaling the number of an offending player, allows for clear communication and more efficient match administration.