



MEMORANDUM

February 18, 2026

VIA EMAIL

TO: NCAA Beach Volleyball Head Coaches and Senior Woman Administrators

FROM: Kristin W. Fasbender
Director, NCAA Championships and Alliances

Ashley Armstrong,
Chair, NCAA Women's Beach Volleyball Committee

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SUBJECT: 2026 NCAA National Collegiate Beach Volleyball Rules Interpretations, Clarifications and Techniques.

Welcome to the 2026 NCAA NC Beach Volleyball Season! There are several important items to review ahead of opening weekend. Thank you for your time and attention to these clarifications, interpretations, and techniques.

Please be reminded that the rules source for NCAA NC Beach Volleyball is the current edition of the USA Volleyball Beach Rules Book. The current edition is dated 2025-2027 and can be found on the [NCAA Beach Volleyball Rules of the Game landing page](#). Due to the team nature of collegiate beach volleyball, the NCAA also authors and maintains an annual Beach Volleyball Rules Modifications document. The current edition is dated 2026 and is also found on the [NCAA Beach Rules of the Game landing page](#).

2026 NCAA Beach Volleyball Rules Modifications

NEW for implementation in the 2026 season

NCAA Rule Modification 4.1.4.5 may not give instructions during play, may give instruction between rallies, during time outs, technical time-outs, side changes, and between sets;

NCAA Rules Interpretation: The addition of this language allows a designated coach, as defined in NCAA Bylaw 11.7.1, to provide instructional content to players between rallies during a pairs match, limited to the specific match in which that coach is actively coaching.

Related clarifications:

- A rally is defined as the sequence of playing actions from the moment of the service hit by the server until the ball is out of play (USAV Rule 6.1.3).
- Coaching between rallies is conducted from the team area (NCAA Rules Modification 4.1.4.6).

Note: the NCAA created a modification that eliminates the requirement for a coach to remain seated/kneeling while in the team area.

- Instruction between rallies must cease when the first referee's arm is extended in preparation to authorize the service (Signal 2, Beach Referee's Hand Signals). Instruction between rallies may begin AFTER the referee's whistle that ends the rally.
- At no time shall coaching disrupt or delay the resumption of play. Coaching that disrupts or delays the resumption of play will result in an individual sanction.

Related Situation and Rules Interpretation (April 3, 2025):

Scenario: *An individual not designated by certification of the institution as the Head Coach, Assistant Coach, or Designated Third Coach and not also listed on a team's Dual Match Line-Up Form is keeping in-game notes and stats (i.e., serving and blocking signals, hitting charts, etc.) from outside the Team Area. Those notes and stats are then passed into an identified Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Designated Third Coach, or match participant during competition. Is this a permissible NCAA Match Standard or NCAA Coaching guideline?*

NCAA Rules Interpretation: *No. When observed, the official will consider such action(s) as external assistance and subjects the Coach (or designated captain, in the absence of a Coach) to sanction (individual misconduct). Misconduct by any player or coach should be managed when possible, through verbal warning(s). Referees may offer one Formal Warning (Individual Yellow Card) per MATCH to a TEAM (player or coach) guilty of misconduct. Subsequent misconduct by ANY player or coach on that team in that MATCH must be sanctioned by **PENALTY** (Red Card: point and serve to opponent). All Misconduct and all Delay warnings or Sanctions remain in effect through the entire MATCH. Reference USA Volleyball Misconduct Sanction Scale (Diagram 7) and NCAA Rules Modification 20.b. The official should also request the Head/Lead Referee to the side of the court to further monitor the issue of external assistance.*

*Due to the potential for NCAA Bylaw violation, **PENALTIES** (red cards) assessed as a result of assistance must be reported to the NCAA NC Beach Volleyball Rules Interpreter at treenie.meyer@gmail.com within 48 hours of the completion of the affected dual.*

USA Volleyball Rule 4.1.4 declares that players are not allowed to receive external assistance or coaching during a match. NCAA Rules Modification 4.1.4.5 further declares that coaches may not give instructions during play, may give instruction only during time outs, technical time-outs, side changes, and between sets.

Additionally, NCAA Rules Modification 4.1.1.4 (in accordance with NCAA Bylaw 11.7.5.4) states that no individual other than coaches designated to fill the coaching limits set forth in Bylaw 11.7.5 may participate in any manner in the coaching of the intercollegiate team of a member institution during any game, practice or other organized activity...

The following has been brought forward to the NCAA Beach Volleyball Rules Interpreter ahead of the 2026 NCAA Beach Volleyball season. Please review the scenario and related rules interpretation for clarification.

Scenario A: Coaches and officials across the country have a growing interest in understanding the current guidelines that govern ball handling – specifically, the act of setting using overhand finger action (not a defensive action).

NCAA Rules Interpretation: There are various rules and guidelines that factor in the assessment of setting using the overhand with fingers technique to determine the legality of the act.

Relevant international guidelines state: During the action of players setting overhand with fingers, the ball must be played with one quick motion. There must not be any significant movement of the ball downwards whilst in the hands and the ball may not visibly come to rest in the player's hands.

Note: *Technically in ALL hand setting actions the ball rests and also moves downward whilst in contact with the hands of the player. It is the quickness of this action that will determine if the "downwards motion" or the "length of the contact" is of visible significance, and consequently a fault.*

Note: *There are various unique methods of setting and passing the ball in Beach Volleyball. A REFEREE must understand the nature of these ball contacts concentrating on their length (the emphasis quite correctly with the catch or thrown ball is the duration of the contact) and how technically correct or clean the contact was (the emphasis with the double contact is that this is not indicated by the spin of the ball but by the fact that a clear fault – time difference between the two hands that contact the ball – has occurred and that this is visible for the REFEREE).*

Note: *REFEREES must find consistency of application around duration of contact and try to maintain uniform criteria in ball handling in general not only on a game basis but also from day to day and tournament to tournament.*

FIVB Refereeing Guidelines and Instructions (May-2025)

Relevant domestic guidelines state:

Ball Handling / Hand Setting: There are two types of ball handling faults: “Catch Balls” and “Double Contact”.

- The ball must be played with one quick motion.
- Balls that significantly move downwards while in the hands, or visibly come to rest, are “Catch Ball” faults (aka: “deep dish,” “held-ball,” or “lift”).
- Clearly distinct and separate contacts of the ball constitute a “Double-Hit.”
 - Spin is not a fault ... but spin may be an indication that a “double-contact” fault has occurred.

USA Volleyball Beach Volleyball Quick-Guide