

Happy New Year to everyone—here is to another great season of volleyball! A few reminders and interpretations we would like to pass along.

NEW RULE – TOSSING ERROR (14s and below)

New USAV 12.4.4a: *Once the serving action is initiated, including an underhand serve, if the server tosses the ball and then catches it or allows it to fall to the floor, this is a considered a service tossing error, including a ball that touches the server as it falls.*

To clarify, the rules regarding when to call a tossing error and re-serve will be the same as NFHS.

When a server:

- Swings and misses the tossed ball (falls to floor without contacting the server).
- Allows the tossed ball to drop to the floor.
- Catches a bad toss.
- Tosses the ball, then lets it drop without swinging at it, but it touches the server's knee or foot (for example) as it drops to the floor.
 - All of these situations result in a re-serve.

When a server:

- Attempts to hit the ball, misses, and the ball contacts the server's shoulder.
 - This action results in a service fault. The server attempted to hit the ball, and the ball contacted them.

As a reminder, USAV still allows one tossing error per service attempt (which is different than NFHS).

WHEN TO SIGNAL REPLAY

There have been several asking whether a replay signal is used for certain scenarios.

- The 1st referee whistles and beckons for serve, and a ball rolls onto the court from an adjacent court before the player serves the ball. The 1st referee whistles to stop the server from serving. Since the ball has not been served, the 1st referee does NOT signal replay. The replay signal is used when a rally is stopped after the rally has begun.
- For 14-and-under competition, a server tosses the ball and has a bad toss. The server catches the ball or lets it drop to the floor. The 1st referee whistles, does not signal replay, and then beckons for serve again. Again, the ball was not put into play, so the rally has not started. The replay signal is only used to “re-play” a rally.

If someone uses the replay signal in these situations, it is okay. The most important thing is that everyone on the court knows to stop, and there will be another beckon for serve.

PROTESTING JUDGMENT

***USAV 5.1.2.1, added:** Judgment decisions are not subject to protest. A protest related to a judgment decision may result in a penalty (red card) being assessed to the coach.*

The rule states that a red card may be issued if a coach/captain protests judgment. This penalty may only be assessed by the **PROTEST COMMITTEE**. The referee **may not** assess a red card if a coach/captain attempts to protest judgment. The 1st referee simply denies the protest and informs the coach/captain that it is a judgment call. If the coach/captain insists on protesting, inform the coach/captain that a red card may be assessed if the protest committee confirms it was judgment, and then accept the protest. See the “2024 Critical Rules Interpretations & Points of Emphasis” module for additional information.

The red card for protesting judgment is an individual red card to the Head Coach. Since sanctions in USA Volleyball rules are for the match and progressive, the next sanction the Head Coach could get would be an expulsion. This could be for another protest of judgment or any other misconduct. Any other member of the team could still receive a yellow card warning for minor misconduct.

COACHES INTERFERING WITH PLAY

***USAV 5.2.3.4:** During the match, the coach may give instructions to players on the court while standing or walking within the free zone in front of his/her team’s bench from the extension of the attack line up to and including the warm-up area, without disturbing or delaying the match. The coach must not obstruct the view of the line judges.*

Coaches may now stand near the court during play, but they must not interfere or disrupt the match. There may be instances where they interfere with play by touching a ball that is still in play or stopping a player from playing a live ball. The 1st referee must judge if the coach’s contacting the ball or stopping a player interfered with play. If the 1st referee judges that a coach interfered with play, the opponent receives the point, and the call is interference (Signal 22). If a coach contacts a ball that is still in play or prevents a player from playing the ball, but the 1st referee does not judge it as interfering with play, the coach must still be verbally warned not to interfere with play. Subsequent actions could lead to an interference call, and the opponent would win the rally. Be proactive and make sure coaches understand not to interfere with play.