



2026 Club Volleyball Coach Handbook

September 22, 2025

www.volleyballalberta.ca

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Coach & Persons in Authority Eligibility for Club Volleyball

- All leaders on team rosters must meet the Mandatory Requirements. Please review the [Volleyball Alberta Coaching Requirements](#) for full details and deadlines.
 - All clubs, coaches, and club staff must become members of Volleyball Alberta prior to participating in club tryouts or training. Volleyball Alberta (VA) provides its membership with administrative, instructional and professional services to assist in the development of volleyball in Alberta. These services include but are not limited to indoor and beach athlete development from grassroots to high performance programs, leadership development of coaches, referees, and club leaders, governance, insurance, sport advocacy, and business development. Please refer to [Volleyball Alberta membership benefits](#) for more information.
 - [Person in Authority Checks](#) must be completed by club and team personnel prior to participating in their role.
 - [Late Fees and Fines](#) may be issued if a mandatory requirement is incomplete by the due date.
- [Volleyball Canada 2025 Coaching Requirements](#) for Youth National Championships have been updated. Please review the requirements carefully if your team will be attending Nationals.
- All teams must have a designated head coach for the season who meets the mandatory head coach requirements. A head coach may not head coach more than one team in the same tournament weekend. The same individual may be designated as an assistant coach, manager, or trainer for additional teams in the same tournament weekend.
- A maximum of four team staff are permitted on the roster and allowed to sit on the bench. One of these team staff must be the head coach. A rostered team staff may act as the head coach in case of unexpected absence.
- The minimum age for team staff on the roster is 11 years of age.

Coaches with Infants/Children

- Team personnel who are parents of an infant (under the age of 2) will be supported by Volleyball Alberta in having the infant on the bench during matches. The infant must be appropriately secured in a hands-free baby carrier or in a stroller directly behind the bench. **The team must notify the age class manager prior to the event to ensure that competition staff are aware.** The team may also be asked to complete a Risk Acknowledgement form as they are exposing the infant to a higher-risk environment.
- Team personnel who are the parent/caregiver to any young children may leave the bench to attend to them during the match provided the referee is notified before they leave. If the parent is the Head Coach, the Assistant Coach would be permitted to temporarily act as head coach during this time.

Selecting Your Team

- A team must be composed of a minimum of 8 players up to a maximum of 15 players. A minimum of 6 players must be present in uniform during competition in order to be eligible to participate.
- **For 15U – 18U age class teams**, a maximum of 15 players can be on the score sheet, in uniform, participate in the warm-up, sit on the bench, and participate in any given match.
 - Note: 15U teams must still align with the Developmental Substitution Rule.
- **For 12U – 14U age class teams**, a maximum of 12 players can be on the score sheet, in uniform, and participate in any given match. Teams may have a maximum of 15 players on the roster, participate in warm-up, and sit on the bench.
- **12U–15U age class teams** that have **more than twelve players** at a tournament must submit the [Extended Roster Development Plan form](#).
- Teams should register in the **most appropriate age class for their development level**. Team composition should be primarily of athletes within the same age class (consult Volleyball Alberta's Director of Technical Pathways for further information). Teams can only select one age class to compete in. Once an age class has been selected, teams must compete in the same age class for the entire season (including Nationals) except for 12U teams (see 12U competition regulations for details).

Athlete Eligibility for Club Volleyball

- Athletes need a Youth Competitive Player – Indoor membership to be added to a team roster.
- The minimum age for athletes on the roster is 9 years of age. Always verify the age eligibility of an athlete using the [Age Categories](#) document before signing them to a team.
- Please review the Age Categories document for full details regarding the 18U Overage Exemption and the eligibility for post-secondary athletes.
 - Teams can have a maximum of two athletes who are currently rostered with a post-secondary team and born Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2007.
 - Head Coaches or team Managers must identify any athletes in this category using the [18U Overage & Post-Secondary Athlete Form](#).
- Athletes cannot play on more than one team in the same tournament weekend.
- Athletes can often play up one age category without many challenges or limitations. However, thought and discussion should occur between the club, athlete, and family to determine the best environment for the athlete. There can be significant disparity if an athlete plays up two age categories, and clubs should review the [Playing Up in Age Categories](#) document prior to making a final decision.
- Volleyball Alberta has a [Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy](#), the purpose of this Policy is to address matters of eligibility to participate in an amateur competitive sport, as required by the Government of Alberta's Fairness and Safety in Sport Act, SA 2024, c F-2.5.

Signing Policy & Tryouts

Please review [2026 Indoor Signing & Tryout Process](#) for full details on LOI and tryout policies, as well as rationale and FAQ's. Volleyball Alberta strongly encourages the volleyball community to work cooperatively to ensure all volleyball participants have a positive experience by following the [Scouting & Recruiting Guidelines](#).

- The 2025-2026 Indoor Club Season starts November 30, 2025, and ends May 31, 2026.
- Volleyball Alberta strongly recommends: Clubs are encouraged to refer to athlete development principles and be very deliberate with any indoor volleyball programming offered during the summer and fall. School volleyball places large demands on athletes and additional training places athletes in a position to develop overuse injuries and burnout.
- Volleyball Alberta Re-Signing LOI Form or LOI Signing Form are the ONLY binding contracts recognized by Volleyball Alberta.
- Coaches and teams should understand the 13U-15U Developmental Substitution Rules prior to selecting their teams. See 13U-15U Competition Regulations for more information.

Roster Management

- Volleyball Alberta recommends that athletes who may play up to fill roster spots as needed are added to those team rosters as early as possible in the season. These additions must be done prior to the roster lock.
- **Tournament Roster Lock Deadlines:** Review the tournament schedule on the [Club General Info page](#) for each tournament's roster lock deadline. Coaches should always use the [Roster Lock Guide](#) to check their athlete and team staff on the roster are correct prior to a roster lock.
 - **New for 2026:** The roster lock deadline will be Thursday at 9:00AM, 9 days prior to each tournament.
 - **Team Staff must have cleared [PIA Checks](#) before they can be an approved member that can be added to a roster.**
 - Rostered Team Staff must select their team role at the time of rostering. A how-to video will be available on the [How to Register page](#).
- **Season Roster Lock Deadline:** The season roster lock deadline is the Premier #2 roster lock deadline for each age class. Please see the tournament schedule on the [Club General Info page](#) for full details.
- **New for 2026: Roster Addition Requests:** Changes made to official Volleyball Alberta rosters after the roster lock deadlines will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. All changes requested before 11:59pm the Thursday before the tournament are subject to a \$25 fee and must be submitted via the [Late Roster Addition Form](#). After 11:59pm the Thursday before the tournament OR after the season roster lock, the fee increases to \$50 and requests must be submitted via email to the Age Class Manager.
- Head Coaches will pick up and verify Official Rosters from Venue Coordinators prior to their first match on the first competition day. Official Rosters must be presented to the **referee** before every match. Only athletes & team staff who appear on the Official Roster and meet screening/training requirements will be allowed to compete.
- Volleyball Alberta recommends that all athletes on a Provincials roster have been rostered with that team earlier in the season

Volleyball Alberta Competitions

- The rules listed in the current edition of the [Volleyball Canada Rule Book](#) are in effect unless otherwise specified under the Volleyball Alberta Competition Regulations. It is the duty and responsibility of all players and coaches to know the rules of the game and abide by them.
- [Tripleball](#) is the official competition format for Canadian regions offering 12U & 13U age competitions. The goal of Tripleball is to promote better skill development, participation, meaningful competition, and fun. All other age classes play standard volleyball format.
 - We recommend that 12U and 13U teams watch the [Tripleball Video](#) and practice the Tripleball format before tournaments, including the tripleball sequence and ball tossing.
 - **EACH TEAM MUST PROVIDE A BALL RETRIEVER** who collects the balls from athletes at the end of a rally (this improves the speed and flow of the game).

New for 2026

- Please review the Volleyball Alberta [2026 Season Planner & Competition Regulations](#) for information on the season competition structure and age class specific regulations.
- Volleyball Alberta staff recommend reviewing the [New for 2026](#) document for a snapshot of changes for this season.
- **New for 2026:** Receiving the serve with an overhand motion using the fingers (volley/setting) IS PERMITTED for all age classes.
- **New for 2026:** 14U Boys will play a North/South Premier #1. A [Serpentine Draw format](#) will be used for all Divisions at Premier #1, Premier #2, Premier #3 and Provincials.
- **New for 2026:** 14U-16U Girls Division sizes of 24 will be used throughout all Premiers/Provincials and divisions.
- **New for 2026:** The 17U and 18U age categories will be combined for Premier #1 and #2. The 17U and 18U age categories will compete separately for Premier #3 and Provincials.
- **New for 2026:** 15U Libero Pilot. Please review the New for 2026 document for details regarding the Libero Pilot.
- **New for 2026:** If time does not permit the integration of a skills challenge, prizing will be distributed to each coach to give to one athlete from their respective teams for the following:
 - Premier #1 = Best Teammate
 - Premier #2 = Most Improved

Please have the coach fill out [12U Athlete Prize Form](#) and upload a photo by **noon, Monday following each Premier** to be included in social media posts for the tournament. Each athlete who receives an award will be included in a prize package draw at the end of the season.

Match Protocol

- Teams are guaranteed a minimum of five (5) matches for two-day tournaments.
- A First Referee will be used for all matches.
- Each team must provide a volunteer scorekeeper. Scorekeeping resources and instructions are available on the [Club General Info page](#), under "Scoresheet Resources".
- For a match in which a team is participating, they will be responsible for the provision of one (1) Line Judge.
 - This individual must be a team player not registered as a starting member of the line-up,
 - This individual must be a team player not registered as the acting Libero (if applicable),
 - If a team does not have enough athletes to provide a Line Judge, the referee shall:
 - Inquire to the opposition coach if they are willing to provide two (2) athletes to act as Line Judges.

- Inquire to the opposition coach if they would prefer the match to commence with no Line Judges and the sole discretion of the First Referee.
- The timing of the [official warm-up protocol](#) will be a 2–4–4 model.
 - 2 minutes of shared court time for ball warm-up (E.g., dig-set, setter warm-up, etc.). Note: Shared court time will start when the court is available to both teams
 - 4 minutes official warm-up at the net – Serving Team
 - 4 minutes official warm-up at the net – Receiving Team

Be reminded that opposing teams are not permitted to use volleyballs in the free zone during the other teams allocated court time, this is an added component to help prevent concussions.

- Uniforms are encouraged to be worn for the official warm-up. This allows the referee to accurately complete responsibilities prior to the start of the match and facilitates timely roster verification by referees.
- We recommend that teams use discretion when changing from warm-up shirts to uniforms in ALL Volleyball Alberta Premier tournaments and Provincials.
- Volleyball Alberta will utilize the following “End of Match Protocol”:
 - After the match, teams must immediately go to their respective three-meter line, applaud for the other team & official(s) PRIOR to moving off court for team meetings/debriefs. Teams will not greet one another before or after the match nor will they shake the referee(s) hand post-match. Teams will acknowledge the opposition and referee(s) by facing them and clapping prior to leaving the court.
 - The intent of a handshake protocol is to congratulate and recognize the efforts of both teams and the referees while promoting good sportsmanship. VA’s end of match protocol still achieves this goal, below is the rationale for why it’s been modified from the traditional handshake:
 - A good portion of the club volleyball season is played during the height of cold/flu season, and this is one small way to help prevent the spread of germs and viruses. This will promote participation keeping athletes, coaches, and referees healthy and active by limiting absenteeism during the season.
 - Emotions can get high on occasion during the intensity of a match, removing face-to-face interactions immediately after the match will prevent the potential for inappropriate conduct.
 - Teams for the next match are extremely eager to take over benches and begin their warm-up and this protocol speeds up the transition to help facilitate the start of the next match. This was tracked and decreases the transition time by an average of over three minutes/match. This helps keep courts on time and reduces later starts for teams playing the last match of the day.
 - We understand some individuals may want to personally praise their peers on opposing teams; they are still able to do that after both teams have cleared court after the match has concluded. We encourage referees to provide friendly reminders to teams of this protocol, remarks can be documented on the scoresheet if required.

Uniforms

- Each registered team shall be dressed for competition as per the Volleyball Canada rulebook. The updated guidelines and Uniform Approval Request form will be available on [Volleyball Canada’s Policy](#) page, under Competition Related Policies.
- **Clubs are highly recommended to Request Uniform Approval from Volleyball Canada PRIOR to ordering uniforms by submitting design proofs.** Once approval is granted, clubs would be sheltered from

any potential costs associated with bringing uniforms up to standard during the club season.

Restricted Activities

- **Please communicate to your athletes and families in advance** that pre-packed personal lunches and snacks that are contained within sports bags will be the only food allowed in any of the venues. No coolers, large containers, or appliances. No food preparation in the venue.
- Music may only be played for personal use with headphones during our events. Our venues are family friendly, and the content of music may be inappropriate or distracting to our members and other patrons.
- Noisemakers of any kind are not permitted at Volleyball Alberta events for any reason.
- It is expected that any teams or spectators using pom-poms or confetti clean up any debris from those items.
- Food is not permitted in gymnasiums at any venues.
- Running and warm-up activities are not permitted in stairwells, hallways, off-limit area, or other inappropriate areas of a facility or school. Use of in other activity spaces in multi-sport facilities (arenas, fields, rooms, closed off areas, private rooms, etc) is not permitted unless the team has pre-arranged a private rental with the facility. Balls may only be used outdoors, on match courts, or on warm-up courts if specified on the draw.
- Please do not block hallways, stairwells, or commandeer shared public spaces for team, pre-game, or post-game meetings.

Video Cameras

- Video cameras in the warm-up area are not permitted (for athletes, parents, or spectators).
- If handheld, a video camera may be operated by a team member sitting on the bench.
- Attaching video cameras to the post, scorer table, referee stand, etc. will not be allowed.
- If there is a vacant court next to the playing court that is not being utilized as a designated warm-up court or competition court for the event, cameras and tripods may be set-up in that space provided:
 - There is no infringement on the participants of the playing court,
 - Cameras and spectators are not encroaching on the team bench, warm-up area, scorer's table, referee location, etc.
 - For facilities with 5+ meters of space behind the service zone (Genesis Centre in Calgary), cameras will be permitted on the playing surface behind the court, provided they are against the facility wall.
- **Remote Controlled Devices:** Any remote-controlled devices (drones, remote controlled cars) are not allowed at Volleyball Alberta events or in venues.
- **NEW for 2026:** To support teams using Ball-Time or other video analysis platforms; One camera will be allowed at the end of a team's warm-up area, provided it is: owned by the team, not staffed during the match, and not behind the endline (when there is less than 5 meters of space). The Head Coach must ensure no other cameras or individuals (not on the official roster) are in the warm-up area.

Refuse & Responsibility Policy

- All bottles, garbage, and personal items must be removed from the team bench after each game. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure this is completed after every match. Repeat offenders will not be permitted to participate in future Volleyball Alberta tournaments.
- Appropriate disposal of bottles or garbage and general cleanliness is expected in all areas of a facility, non-compliance is subject to a \$50 fine for each offense.

- Coaches and team staff are responsible for managing their bench and ensuring the area is clean after each match.

Late Fees and Fines

Please review the [Late Fees and Fines](#) for 2026. Fines may be applicable for violations of:

- Signing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Coach Eligibility Requirements
- Competition Regulations
- Roster Policies
- Registration Policies

Lost and Found

At the end of each tournament, Volleyball Alberta staff return any lost and found items from a venue to the closest Volleyball Alberta office. To inquire about a lost and found item, please contact the Age Class Manager at your earliest convenience after an event.

We highly recommend that your team check the bench for personal items after each match.

Complaints & Conflict Resolution at VA Tournaments

To address a rule-related complaint during a match, teams can initiate a protest. A captain may only lodge a protest in the following circumstances: an error in applying a rule or rule interpretation, an improper decision of the Scorer who made a mistake on the rotational order or on the score. For full details on this process, go to page 16 of the [2026 Volleyball Alberta Competition Regulations](#).

To file a [Safe Sport](#) concern of maltreatment, including sexual, emotional, physical abuse, neglect, harassment, bullying, exploitation or discrimination, call the ALIAS by phone or text at 1-833-834-1029 or through the [ALIAS Report a Complaint](#) link.

Code of Conduct Concerns

In-match conflict involving teams, score keepers, or lines people must be handled by the referees officiating the match, with support of the Referee Supervisor as required/if available.

If a coach has a concern about the conduct of a participant at Volleyball Alberta events, whether that is another coach, athlete, spectator, referee, or other person, the following process will be used:

1. Coaches bring their concern to onsite Volleyball Alberta staff.
2. Volleyball Alberta staff determine if any immediate actions and/or sanctions need to take place.
 - A [Zero Tolerance Policy](#) was put in place at Volleyball Alberta Premier Tournaments and Provincials as of February 11, 2022. It acts to maintain a safe and positive environment that is appropriate for youth sport. For incidents which require immediate actions following the Zero Tolerance Policy, the Volleyball Alberta on-call competition manager will be consulted. If necessary, a jury, which may include the Volleyball Alberta onsite staff, VA competitions managers, and/or a referee or referee supervisor, will be assembled to decide appropriate next steps.
 - VA Staff may request that an incident report be filled out.
2. Volleyball Alberta full-time staff or Discipline and Complaints chair may follow up on Code of Conduct concerns depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

Athlete Health & Wellness

Volleyball Alberta expects that:

- Team staff have athlete medical forms on-hand.
- Teams carry a first aid kit.

Volleyball Alberta also recommends that one of the team staff have first aid certification.

Concussions

Volleyball Alberta recognizes that concussions are a significant public health issue and have developed our [Concussion Protocol](#). Of specific note are the expectations surrounding the team warm-up process to help prevent concussions. Volleyball Alberta has prepared a video with options for the [hitting warm-up](#). Coaches should be prepared to follow concussion protocols and return to play best practices if an athlete suffers a concussion.

Tournament Medical

Athletic Therapy

Volleyball Alberta provides athletic therapy services during Premiers & Provincials. Athletic Therapists are a helpful resource for athletes who require concussion assessment, preventative taping, or recommendations for pain or minor injuries. Therapists are free for athletes to use; however, they are not onsite at all venues. For injuries sustained during a tournament, athletic therapists may make recommendations for an athlete's participation in remaining matches. It is expected that athletes who would like to see the therapist go to the venue where the therapist is on duty and bring their own medical supplies (tape, etc.) if applicable.

Suggested Protocol for Minor Injuries

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Contact the athlete's emergency contact.
3. Do not leave the athlete unattended until their emergency contact arrives.
4. Seek immediate medical attention if the athlete develops dizziness, difficulty breathing, fever, or changes to their mental status (confusion, vision changes).
5. The athlete may wish to seek medical attention (non-urgent) if the injury does not improve or requires medical imaging and/or further care.

Protocol for Major Injuries or Emergencies

1. Notify onsite Volleyball Alberta staff, who will enact the facilities Emergency Action Plan.
 - The VA staff or other pre-designated facility staff will call for medical assistance/ambulance.
 - Facility staff will escort medical personnel or ambulance.
2. A coach or team staff should contact the athlete's emergency contact. Coaches or team staff may be asked to provide any known medical conditions or medications to medical professionals if parents/guardians are not available.
3. After the athlete has been taken care of, please see the onsite VA staff to file an Incident/Accident Report.

Rule of Two

[Open, observable, and justifiable interactions and communications](#) are strongly recommended to foster safety, enhance protection, and help reduce vulnerability of both the athlete and adult(s) in a position of trust. Commonly referred to as the [Rule of Two](#), it means that there will always be two screened and safety-trained adults with a participant, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation. Applying the Rule of Two is a measure that helps mitigate opportunities for maltreatment and abuse to occur.

OPEN AND OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS: RULE OF TWO



RULE OF
2

WHAT IS IT?

RULE OF TWO states that there will always be two screened and safety-trained adults with a participant, especially a minor athlete, when in a potentially vulnerable situation.

WHAT ARE OPEN AND OBSERVABLE ENVIRONMENTS?

Open and observable spaces involve making meaningful and concerted efforts to avoid situations where a person of authority: coach, official, staff member, etc., might be alone with an athlete and/or vulnerable individual.

-  Not closed or concealed from others
-  No closed doors or secluded locations
-  Others should be aware the interaction is taking place
-  Others can see, observe or take note of the interaction



Volleyball Canada (VC) endorses the Coaching Association of Canada's Responsible Coaching Movement and all participants of VC events, activities, and meetings are encouraged to adhere to these best practice guidelines.
www.coach.ca/responsiblecoaching

INTERACTIONS

	ONE COACH ONE ATHLETE	✗
	ONE COACH TWO ATHLETES	△
	ONE TRAINED COACH ONE SCREENED ADULT ONE ATHLETE	△
	TWO TRAINED AND SCREENED COACHES ONE ATHLETE	✓

ELIMINATE
one-to-one electronic messaging and ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents (for minors) or other certified coaches and/or staff members.

CONSIDER
the gender of the participant when selecting the screened people for the closed meeting.

ENSURE
a minor participant rides in a vehicle with two screened adults present. 

For more information, visit volleyball.ca/en/about/safe-sport

Safe Sport

Volleyball Alberta is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming sport environment and recognizes a systemic culture shift is required to eliminate maltreatment, including sexual, emotional, physical abuse, neglect, harassment, bullying, exploitation and discrimination. Volleyball Alberta believes the welfare and safety of everyone involved in the sport is a critical focus and the responsibility of each individual, member, club and provider in the volleyball community. Volleyball Alberta has zero tolerance for any type of harassment or abuse. Athletes, officials, coaches, administrators, and parents are encouraged to report any instances of harassment and abuse in a way they feel safe.

Creating a culture where everyone can thrive is a shared responsibility. Whether you have direct contact with athletes or work in the background, Safe Sport Training promotes physical, psychological, and social health, and meets Sport Canada requirements for Safe Sport education. The safe sport module is a FREE, 90- minute eLearning module that gives all participants the tools to recognize, address, and prevent maltreatment in sport.

Please note that a current [Respect in Sport Group's Activity Leader](#) certificate is a recognized equivalent and meets the Safe Sport training requirements should you already have it.

New for 2026: Changes to Safe Sport Reporting



As part of our ongoing efforts to improve our safe sport protocols, we'd like to inform you of some important updates: effective immediately, the Canadian Sport Helpline and the Abuse-Free Sport Helpline are no longer available. However, Volleyball Alberta is proud to announce that we've partnered with ALIAS Solutions Inc. to offer an independent safe sport reporting service.

This new platform will allow individuals to report improper conduct confidentially via both the web and phone, ensuring that all safe sport (maltreatment) reports are managed by ALIAS's independent third-party case management team.

This partnership strengthens our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and transparent environment for all Volleyball Alberta members.

Volleyball Alberta strives to offer a safe and enjoyable environment for all event participants and spectators. If any players, team staff members, staff, referees or spectators feel unsafe or have witnessed a behavior that may be inappropriate, they are strongly encouraged to approach a VA Representative that is on-site.

Safe Sport Complaint Process Overview

ALIAS follows the framework of Volleyball Alberta's Discipline & Complaints Policy (located [here](#)). There are 2 ways to report a complaint:

- Visit: [ALIAS' "Report A Complaint" link](#)
- Call: 1-833-834-1029

Once an individual submits a report, the ALIAS' team receives the report and determines the steps to resolution based on Volleyball Alberta [Policies](#). ALIAS manages the case and involves external parties when needed. Cases are handled with the utmost confidentiality and compassion.

Volleyball Alberta Sponsors

