



## “Old School Rules”

At The Pottstown Rumble Volleyball Tournament

This rule book, “Old School Rules” was developed by The Pottstown Rumble with intention to provide a framework of rules that existed during the “Side-out era” of volleyball, and guidelines to support fair play and reduce conflicts. Questions in advance of the event should be sent to [questions@pottstownrumble.com](mailto:questions@pottstownrumble.com). Questions on-site should be referred to a tournament director or Rumble staff.

**Highlighted:** “Old-School” Rules, Rumble-specific rules, and points of interest.

### THE 4 MAJOR RULES THAT DEFINE “OLD SCHOOL RULES” AT THE RUMBLE

**Side-out Scoring:** Only the serving team can score points

**Blocks don’t count as hits.** Blocking team gets three contacts after a block.

**No let serves.** A serve that hits the net is a fault.

**Court size:** 30ft by 60ft

### TOURNAMENT FORMAT

#### Pool Play then Single-Elimination Playoffs

**Pool Play:** All teams will be placed into 4 or 5 team pools. Teams will play all other teams in their pool, AKA Round-robin play. The top 2 teams in each pool with the best records will advance to playoffs.

#### Tie-break criteria:

2 teams tied for 1st place: **Rank teams by H2H record, then H2H PD, then Total PD to determine 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place.**

2 teams tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place: **The teams must playoff\* to determine who gets 2<sup>nd</sup> place.**

3+ teams tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place: **Rank tied teams by H2H record, then H2H PD, then Total PD. The top team wins the pool. The other teams must playoff\* to determine who gets 2<sup>nd</sup> place.**

3+ teams tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place: **Rank tied teams by H2H record, then H2H PD, then Total PD. The other teams must playoff\* to determine who gets 2<sup>nd</sup> place.**

H2H= Head to Head; PD=Point Differential

**\* All tie-breaker, playoff games are to 11 points, rally scoring, win by 2 points, no cap. Pro Division plays side-out scoring.**

*(Tournament directors may change tie-breaker format to account for time limitations.)*

#### Playoffs are a Single-Elimination Format, 15-point games.

*(Tournament directors may change game format to accommodate time limitations.)*

Playoff seeding is determined by Winning Percentage (*Wins/Games played*), then Total Point Differential (*Points scored – Points allowed*)

**Time saving measure:** All levels except Pro will switch to Rally Scoring in pool play at 5pm on Main Field and 4pm on all Satellite Fields.

### PLAYING LEVEL GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The Pottstown Rumble aims to ensure fair competition by maintaining consistency in division placement. Please choose your playing division carefully. **Sandbagging\* will not be tolerated.**

We offer many levels of play including B, BB, A, AA and Pro. **Play your appropriate division. Playing below your level “Sandbagging” will not be tolerated.** If you’re not sure what level to play, check our guidelines and/or send a message through our web site.

#### Guidelines:

**Play to the level of the best player on your team:** If you are an A player and your partner is a AA player, you should register to play in division AA.

**If you play in the Pro/Open division,** you must play in at least AA on other days, regardless of your partners’ level.



**If you make it to a final in any Rumble division**, you must play at least the next highest level available in all future Rumble events, including the next day: For example: If you played “Men’s A” on Saturday and make it to the finals, you must play at least “Co-ed AA” on Sunday and all subsequent Rumble events.

**Age guidelines for Masters and Juniors:** Players should register for the division that corresponds to their age on the day of play. 18U means 18 years and under. 50+ means 50 years or older.

**Gendered divisions:** From now on, male to female (MTF) transgender athletes who have transitioned after (male) puberty will be prohibited from participating in Women’s events at the Pottstown Rumble – in all categories – in the various disciplines/divisions.

**The Pottstown Rumble reserves the right** to assess a player/team's skill level and recommend placement in a different division to ensure fair competition. If you have any questions about the Division your team should register for, please contact us. If you wish to play “down” with lower-level friends, you must first get permission from registration to assure fair competition.

## FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

### PLAYING AREA

The playing area includes the playing court and the free zone. The free zone is considered any area outside of the playing court that does not interfere with another court. Players may not enter into another court, even after hitting the ball.

### COURT DIMENSIONS

**The playing court for ALL formats and divisions is a rectangle measuring 60 x 30 feet.**

### HEIGHT OF THE NET

The height of the net shall be 8’ for Men’s doubles, Co-ed, Quads and Junior Boys (16U, 18U). It shall be 7’4” for Women’s doubles, Junior Boys (10U, 12U, 14U) and all Junior Girls’ divisions.

### BALL

**The Wilson Optx AVP Official Beach Volleyball (Yellow and Black) is the official ball of The Pottstown Rumble.**

### PLAYERS’ EQUIPMENT

Players may play barefoot or with shoes not consisting of hard/sharp plastic/metal spikes. Soccer turf shoes or trail runners are acceptable.

## SUBSTITUTIONS

Once the tournament starts, there are NO substitutions or replacement of players. In Triples and Quads, teams may continue playing if they lose a player. *In Triples, we do allow a fourth registered player who may sub, but only at the beginning of a match. No mid-game substitutions.*

## PREPARATION OF THE MATCH, STRUCTURE OF PLAY

### PREPARATION OF THE MATCH

COIN TOSS (or rock-paper-scissors, odds-or-evens, etc.)

Before the official warm-up, the first referee conducts the coin toss in the presence of the team captains, where appropriate. The winner of the coin toss gets to choose one of the following for the first game:

- a) the right to serve or receive the service, or;
- b) the side of the court.

For the second game in a two-game match, the coin toss loser gets first choice of the above options.

**Prior to the match, if the teams have previously had another playing court at their disposal, they will have a 3-minute warm-up period at the net; if not, they may have 5 minutes.**

## GAME AND RALLY WINNER

### GAME SCORING SYSTEM – SIDE-OUT SCORING

**A game can be played to 15 or 11 points. Points are only scored by the serving team (AKA Side-Out Scoring).**

**The first team to score 15 points (or 11) by side-out scoring with a minimum lead of 2 points wins the game.**

**Games to 11 are capped at 13 points. Games to 15 are capped at 17 points. There are no caps for Pro level playoffs and all Finals games.**

### RALLY, SCORING A POINT AND SIDE-OUTS

A RALLY is the sequence of playing actions from the moment of the service hit by the server until the ball is out of play, or a fault is committed.

A team wins a rally:

by successfully landing the ball on the opponent’s court;



when the opponent team commits a fault;  
when the opponent team receives a penalty.

A POINT is scored when the serving team wins a rally.

A "SIDE-OUT" is earned when the team receiving serve wins a rally. No point is scored.

#### FAULT

A team commits a fault by making a playing action contrary to the rules (or by violating them in some other way). The referees judge the faults and determine the consequences according to the rules:

if two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is counted;

if two or more faults are committed by opponents simultaneously, a

DOUBLE FAULT is called and the rally is replayed.

#### PLAYING ACTIONS - STATES OF PLAY:

##### BALL IN PLAY

The rally begins with the referee's whistle or from the service hit when no whistle is used.

##### BALL OUT OF PLAY

The rally ends when the ball lands on the court or a playing fault has been committed. Exception: If a player commits a fault, such as touching the net, during the continuation of playing the ball, it is a fault, regardless of when the ball touches the ground.

##### BALL "IN"

The ball is "in" when it touches the ground of the playing court including the boundary lines

##### BALL "OUT" The ball is "out" when it:

a) falls on the ground completely outside the boundary lines (without touching them);

b) touches an object outside the court, or a person out of play;

c) touches the net support ropes or posts;

d) crosses completely the vertical plane of the net, totally or even partly outside the net posts during service or the third hit of the team.

e) crosses the net more than once per rally. Ex: An errant pass goes outside the net pole into the opponents out-of-bounds playing area. His partner gets to the ball and plays it back to his playing area, outside the net pole and his partner makes an attack hit. There is no fault. If the player in the opponents playing area brings the ball back inside the pole, over the net, this is a fault.

#### PLAYING FAULTS

##### DEFINITION

Any playing action contrary to the Rules is a playing fault.

The referees judge the faults and determine the penalties according to these Rules.

##### CONSEQUENCES OF A FAULT

There is always a penalty for a fault: the opponents of the team committing the fault win the rally. If two or more faults are committed successively, only the first one is counted. If two or more faults are committed by the two opponents simultaneously, a DOUBLE FAULT is counted, and the rally is replayed.

#### PLAYING THE BALL

##### TEAM HITS

Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 hits before sending the ball into the opposing court. **Blocking does not constitute a team hit, and any player may make the first contact of the ball after the block.** Each team must play within its own playing area and the free zone. Team hits include not only intentional hits by the player, but also unintentional contacts with the ball. A player may not hit the ball two times consecutively. (For exceptions, see CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT and BLOCK.)

##### SIMULTANEOUS CONTACTS

Two players may touch the ball at the same moment. When two teammates touch the ball simultaneously, it is counted as two hits except at blocking. If there are simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net and the ball remains in play, the team receiving the ball is entitled to another three hits. If such a ball goes out, it is the fault of the team on the opposite side. If simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net lead to a held ball, it is NOT considered a fault.

##### ASSISTED HIT

Within the playing area, a player is not permitted to take support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball. However, the player who is about to commit a fault (touch the net or interfere with an opponent, etc.) may be stopped or held back by a teammate.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT

The ball may touch any part of the body.

**The ball must be hit, not caught or thrown.** It can rebound in any direction.

Exceptions:

- a) In defensive action of a hard-driven ball. In this case, the ball can be held momentarily with the fingers as well as double-contacted as long as it is with one action of playing the ball.
- b) If simultaneous contacts by the two opponents leads to a held ball.
- c) At blocking, consecutive contacts by one or more blockers are authorized, provided they occur during one action.
- d) **At the first hit of the team, unless it is played overhand using fingers, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action.** The play must be reactive in nature. If the player has time to contact the ball cleanly, they must.

### **Hand setting/finger action**

Plays involving finger action require special attention:

- a) If the play is defensive and reactive in nature, as in the case of a hard-driven ball, momentarily held or double-contacted balls are not considered faults. This may apply if a block contact was slight and the ball is still a hard-driven attack.
- b) **If the player decides/intends to employ finger action, as in the case of off-speed attack, defense or setting, the action must be clean.**
- c) **Only the Pro Division may hand-set a non-driven, first ball over the net, and it must be clean.**
- d) **Only the Pro Division may make a handset attack hit (AKA overset) The play must be clean and the ball must be directed perpendicular to the setter's shoulders (AKA straight back or straight forward.)**

## FAULTS AT PLAYING THE BALL

**FOUR HITS:** a team hits the ball four times before returning it.

**ASSISTED HIT:** A player takes support from a teammate or any structure/object in order to reach the ball within the playing area.

**HELD BALL:** A player catches the ball or it comes to rest during contact. The ball must rebound after contact. (Ex: In a hand-setting action, players must be moving into the ball at contact. A downward motion after contact is a held ball.), Exception: In defensive action of a hard-driven ball or when simultaneous contacts by the two opponents over the net lead to a momentary "held ball."

**DOUBLE CONTACT:** a player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball touches various parts of his/her body successively. (Exceptions: see CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIT and BLOCK.)

**THROW:** A player may not throw the ball. The ball must rebound off of the contact. Using finger action to push or throw is a fault. Exception for simultaneous contacts by opposing players during a block (AKA Joust)

## BALL AT NET

### BALL CROSSING THE NET

The ball sent to the opponent's court must go over the net within the crossing space. The crossing space is the part of the vertical plane of the net limited as follows:

- a) below, by the top of the net
- b) at the sides, by the net posts and their imaginary extension
- c) above, by a ceiling or structure (if any).

The ball that has crossed the vertical plane of the net to the opponent's free zone outside of the crossing space may be played back within the team hits provided that the ball, when played back, crosses the vertical plane of the net again **outside** the crossing space on the same side of the court. The opposing team may not prevent such action.

### BALL TOUCHING THE NET

While crossing the net, the ball may touch the net **except when serving (let serve).**

### BALL IN THE NET

A ball driven into the net may be recovered within the limits of the three team hits. If the ball rips the mesh of the net or tears it down, the rally is canceled and replayed.

## PLAYER AT THE NET

Each team must play within its own court and playing space. The ball may, however, be retrieved from the free zone.

### REACHING BEYOND THE NET



In blocking, a blocker may touch the ball beyond the net after his/her opponent has performed an attack hit. A player is permitted to pass his/her hand beyond the net after his/her attack-hit, provided that his/her contact has been made within his/her own playing space.

#### PENETRATION INTO THE OPPONENT'S SPACE, COURT AND/OR FREE ZONE

A player may enter into the opponent's space, court and/or free zone, provided that this does not interfere with the opponent's play. If a player goes under the net and contacts an opponent, this is automatic interference that results in the player's team losing the rally.

#### CONTACT WITH THE NET

Contact with the net by a player is a fault. Incidental contact of the hair is never a fault. **Once the player has hit the ball, he/she may touch the post, rope or any other object outside the total length of the net provided that this action does not interfere with play.** When the ball is driven into the net and causes it to touch an opponent, no fault is committed.

#### PLAYER'S FAULTS AT THE NET

- a) A player touches the ball or an opponent in the opponent's space before the opponent's attack-hit.
- b) A player penetrates into the opponent's space, court and/or free zone, interfering with the other team's play.
- c) A player touches the net during his/her action of playing the ball or interferes with the play.
- d) A player's clothing is considered part of the player, so if any clothing contacts the net, it constitutes a net violation fault. If a player is wearing a hat and it contacts the net, it is considered a net fault. If the hat is dislodged during the course of play and then contacts the net while dislodged, it's not considered a fault.

### SERVICE

#### DEFINITION

The service is the act of putting the ball into play by hitting the ball from within the service zone (anywhere between the sidelines and behind the end line.) and directing it into the opponent's court. A player may only use one hand or arm to contact a serve.

#### SERVICE ORDER

The first team to serve in a match is determined by a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss may choose to serve or receive. Teams alternate the first service in each game. After the first service in a game, the player to serve next is determined as follows:

- a) When the serving team wins the rally, the player who served before serves again.
- b) When the receiving team wins the rally, it gains the right to serve, and the next player on your team serves.
- c) **If a player is discovered serving out of order, that player continues to serve with no loss of points. The opposing team remains in its service order, but the offending team will then reverse its original order of service to ensure that no player will serve three consecutive terms of service. Excessive misuse of this privilege is unsportsmanlike conduct.**

#### EXECUTION OF THE SERVICE

The server may move freely within the free zone before contacting the ball, but must contact the ball within the service zone (inside the sidelines and behind the end line). At the moment of service hit or take-off for a jump service, the server must not touch the court (the end line included). His/her foot may not go under the line. After his/her hit, the server may step or land outside the zone, or inside the court. If the line moves because of the sand/grass pushed by the server, it is not considered a fault. The ball shall be hit with one hand or any part of the arm after being tossed or released and before it touches the playing surface.

#### SERVICE ATTEMPT

**If the server releases the ball for service but does not hit it, a second attempt is allowed.** A player may only receive one such replay during any one term of service.

#### SCREENING

The server's teammates must not prevent the opponents, through screening, from seeing the server or the path of the ball. On an opponent's request, a player must move sideways, bend over or bend down.

#### **SERVING FAULTS AFTER HITTING THE BALL**

After the ball has been correctly hit, the service becomes a fault if the ball:

- a) touches a player of the serving team
- b) **touches the net (Let serve)**
- c) fails to cross the vertical plane of the net
- d) goes "out"

#### **SERVICE RECEPTION**

A serve is not considered a hard-driven ball and therefore may not be double-contacted or played with any finger action\*. Service may be received with an open-hand action ONLY if the ball is contacted by the palm or other hard surface of the hand. **No finger pads may be used while receiving service. The ball must rebound off**



the receiving surface without using any finger action and may not come to rest. Hands do not have to be touching or together, but if the hands are apart, the ball must be contacted simultaneously. A double-contact includes contact with a hand that is still in contact with the player.

\* Pro Division may hand-set a serve, but it must be clean

#### Co-ed Courtesy Rule

No courtesy rule in Co-ed Divisions AA and A. For Divisions BB and B: Men must serve to the Man's half of the court. Women may serve either side. One missed courtesy serve is allowable per game with no fault. Any subsequent missed courtesy service will be considered a fault and loss of serve.

## ATTACK HIT

### DEFINITION

All actions to direct the ball toward the opponent, except when serving and blocking, are considered attack-hits. An attack-hit is completed the moment the ball completely crosses the vertical plane of the net or is touched by the blocker. Any player may carry out an attack-hit at any height, provided that his/her contact with the ball has been made within the player's own playing space.

### ATTACK-HIT FAULTS

- a) A player hits the ball within the playing space of the opposing team.
- b) A player hits the ball "out."
- c) A player completes an attack-hit using an "open-handed tip or dink" directing the ball with the fingers.
- d) A player completes an attack-hit on the opponent's service, when the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
- e) A player hand-sets a ball over the net. Only Pro level may hand-set over the net.

## BLOCK

### DEFINITION

Blocking is the action of players close to the net (arms' length) intercepting the ball coming from the opponent by reaching higher than the top of the net.

### HITS BY THE BLOCKER

The first hit after the block may be executed by any player, including the blocker.

### BLOCK WITHIN THE OPPONENT'S SPACE

In blocking, the player may place his/her hands and arms beyond the net provided that his/her action does not interfere with the opponent's play. Thus, it is not permitted to touch the ball beyond the net until the opponent has executed an attack-hit.

### BLOCKING CONTACT

A blocking contact is **not** counted as a team hit. The blocking team will have three more hits after a blocking contact. Consecutive (quick and continuous) contacts may occur by one or more blockers provided that the contacts are made during one action. These are not counted as a team hit. These contacts may occur with any part of the body.

### BLOCKING FAULTS

The blocker touches the ball in the opponent's space either before or simultaneously with the opponent's attack-hit. A player blocks the opponent's service. The ball is sent out off the block. The blocker uses finger action to tip or throw the ball.

## TIME-OUTS

### DEFINITION

A time-out is a regular set interruption, and it lasts for 1 minute.

### NUMBER OF TIME-OUTS

Each team is entitled to a maximum of two time-outs per game.

### REQUESTS FOR TIME-OUT

Time-outs may be requested by the players only when the ball is out of play and before the whistle or service contact, by showing the time-out hand signal. Time-outs may follow one another with no need to resume the set. The players must have authorization from referees to leave the playing area.

### IMPROPER REQUESTS

Among others, it is improper to request a time-out:

- a) during a rally, or at the moment the opposing team starts to serve;
- b) after having exhausted the authorized time-out.

Any improper request that does not affect or delay the set shall be rejected without any sanction unless repeated in the same set.



## DELAYS TO THE SET

### TYPES OF DELAY

An improper action of a team that defers the resumption of the set is a delay and includes, among others:

- a) prolonging time-outs, after having been instructed to resume the set
- b) repeating an improper request in the same game
- c) delaying the set (12 seconds shall be the maximum time from the end of a rally to the whistle for service under normal playing conditions)

### SANCTIONS FOR DELAYS

The first delay by a team in a game is sanctioned with a DELAY WARNING. The second and subsequent delays of any type by the same team in the same set constitute a fault and are sanctioned with a DELAY PENALTY: loss of a rally.

## EXCEPTIONAL SET INTERRUPTIONS

### INJURY

Should a serious accident occur while the ball is in play, the referee must stop the set immediately. The rally is then replayed. An injured player is given a maximum of 5 minutes recovery time one time a match.

### EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE

If there is an external interference during the game, play must be stopped and the rally replayed.

**DISRUPTION OF COURT LINES.** If a player disrupts the court lines, play continues. If an in/out call cannot be made due to the disruption, that player is considered at fault and their team loses rally.

## COURT SWITCHES AND INTERVALS

### COURT SWITCHES

In games played to 15 points, teams switch sides every time the combined score reaches a multiple of 5 points (i.e., 5, 10, 15). In games played to 11 points, teams switch sides every time the combined score reaches a multiple of 4 points (i.e., 4, 8, 12).

### INTERVALS

The interval between each game lasts 5 minutes. During court switches, the teams have a 30-second break. If the court switch is not made at the proper time, it will take place as soon as the error is noticed with no loss of points.

## MISCONDUCT

Incorrect conduct by a team member toward officials, opponents, their teammate, or spectators is classified in four categories according to the degree of the offense.

### CATEGORIES

- a) Unsportsmanlike conduct: argumentation, intimidation, etc.
- b) Rude conduct: acting contrary to good manners or moral principles, expressing contempt
- c) Offensive conduct: defamatory or insulting words or gestures
- d) Aggression: physical attack or intended aggression

### SANCTIONS

Depending on the degree of the incorrect conduct, according to the judgment of the first referee and the tournament director, the sanctions to be applied are:

- a) **MISCONDUCT WARNING:** for unsportsmanlike conduct, no sanction is given but the team member concerned is warned against repetition in the same game.
- b) **MISCONDUCT PENALTY:** for rude conduct or repeated unsportsmanlike conduct, the team is sanctioned with the loss of a rally.
- c) **EXPULSION:** repeated rude conduct or offensive conduct is sanctioned by expulsion. The team member who is sanctioned with expulsion must leave the playing area and their team is declared incomplete for the game.
- d) **DISQUALIFICATION:** for aggression, the player must leave the playing area and his/her team is declared incomplete for the match.

**DISQUALIFICATION** due to aggression does not require a prior sanction.

### MISCONDUCT BEFORE AND BETWEEN SETS

Any misconduct occurring before or between sets is sanctioned according to the sanction scale and the sanction is applied in the following set.