GCCYS GIRLS VOLLEYBALL RULES
2026

1. Each member school's volleyball coordinator must ensure that players meet eligibility guidelines. They can be found in Sections 1005.01-1005.06 of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Policy on Catholic Sports, Effective August 1, 2026, available here: https://www.gccys.com/sites/default/files/2026-05/AOC-Catholic-Sports-Policy.pdf
   Players must play in Grade Level player is currently enrolled in for grade school. No playing up grades, except where grades are combined to field a lower level team (ex., 7th/8th combined Level III team).
2. Each member's sports coordinator/director must ensure that all rosters are submitted and GCCYS liability waivers completed ONE WEEK PRIOR to the first game/season start. Players may be added to the roster before the fifth game but not play unless waiver is on file.
3. Please pay officials before the game. Coaches should provide officials with a printed copy of their roster including girl's names and numbers. Officials have been instructed not to take abuse from coaches, players, or parents. They will ask you to leave or forfeit. Let's all demonstrate good sportsmanship.
4. A single referee will be assigned to each match for all grade levels. Total payment for this referee is $30 (each coach should pay the referee $15 before the start of the match). In some cases, which will be communicated in advance, a two-referee system will be used for the season-ending tournament. This is typically done for 6th-8th grade Level 1 tournament matches. When two referees are present, each team must pay each referee $15.
5. All games are to be played as scheduled. The GCCYS is the only one able to change games and games will only be changed for parish/school- sponsored events that are mandatory. The GCCYS office must have 10 days' notice of any game changes unless there is a catastrophic reason or a weather emergency (e.g., power outage).
6. Teams must start a match with a minimum of 5 players. This rule is in place to assist parishes in keeping teams from getting very large and for allowing some flexibility for coaches for matches to be played.
7. If a 6th player arrives after the start of a set, that player may not enter the match until after the current set in progress is completed.
8. Substitution Rules

   Regular Season:

   8.1 For 3rd - 4th grade teams, an eligible substitute(s) can come from the same grade or younger.

8.2 For 5th - 8th grade teams, an eligible substitute(s) can come from a younger grade at any level OR the same grade at an equal or lesser league level.

8.3 If a substitute cannot be found that meets any of these criteria, the team has the following options:

CHOICE ONE: Obtain one player from a higher level in the same grade, but the game will be counted as a forfeit and the score must be reported as 2-0.

CHOICE TWO: Play with only 5 players from their own roster resulting in the 6th player as a "ghost" player. Every time the ghost player moves into the serving position it will be an automatic side out to the other team (loss of point and loss of serve). The ghost player should automatically take position #6 in your serving and rotational order. If a team starting with 5 players sustains an injury, the match can continue with only 4 players. This will result in two ghost positions. If the match continues to a new set, the ghost players should automatically take positions #3 and #6 in your serving and rotational order and will continue to be a side out for the other team.

CHOICE THREE: Play with only 4 players from original roster and 2 non rostered players (after obtaining alternate players if/as allowed in Sections 8.1 and 8.2, above) and with school volleyball coordinator approval).

CHOICE FOUR: Play with only 3 players from original roster and 3 non rostered players (after obtaining alternate players i if/as allowed in Sections 8.1 and 8.2, above) and with school volleyball coordinator approval. This team will officially FORFEIT the game, but the match can still be played. This option allows the league to offer the teams/players an opportunity at the younger ages to play with the correct 6 positions. Our intent is to create less confusion during the learning years for these players. SCORES for CHOICE FOUR will be recorded 2-0

8.4 In all of the above cases, the school/parish coordinator should be made aware so a player of equal talent level of the player(s) missing is used as the substitute(s). If the league finds a team "stacking" a roster the score will be registered a forfeit. No debate, no protest.

8.5 Coaches having 4 players or less and playing with Non Rostered substitute players should be extremely upfront with the other coach ***before the start of the match*** to avoid reports to the league.

8.6 **If a team does not show up for a scheduled match, the match will be considered a forfeit and your school/parish will be subject to a $50 forfeit fee.** Forfeit fees should be sent to the GCCYS and we will take care of paying the officials. If these fees are not paid, you are ineligible for the post-season tournament.

Post-Season Tournament:

8.7 **Only CHOICE TWO above may be used in the Post-Season Tournament. Otherwise, games will be forfeited where 6 players are not available**.

9. Each home gym MUST have available ten (10) Volley Lites and ten 10 volleyballs for the opposing team's use during warmups. Opposing coaches should use the home team's balls supplied for warmups. This will alleviate the need for coaches to bring bags of balls and track them down after warmups and after games.

10. All leagues will play by the National Federation Volleyball Rules with the following GCCYS modifications:

    10.1. Each team will play 10 regular season matches. No A-B-C (Levels 1, 2, 3, 4) teams prior to 5th grade. Grades 3rd-4th are to be evenly divided (balanced).

    10.2. **All** teams in 3rd-4th-5th, and all 6th-8th teams in ***Level 4,*** must play each player one full set from start to finish. **This includes 5th, Level I.** Coaches should strive for roughly even playing time or what is determined by your school/parish. Exception is if a player is injured or sick. You must play all your players regardless of the opposing team's size. This rule is in effect for the regular season as well as the post-season tournament.

    10.3. The scorekeeper must sit at or next to the scorer's table. It is the scorekeeper's responsibility to keep track of playing time in an official Volleyball scorekeeping book.

    10.4. 6th-8th grade Level 1 to Level 3 have NO required playing time, but coaches should make every effort for adequate playing time for all players. Absent an injury or illness, there should be no situations where any player does not participate in every game.

    10.5. For all grades:

        10.5.1. Scoring is rally scoring. First two sets to 25 (27 max total) and third game to 15 (17 max total). For 3rd and 4th grades, the third set will be played to 25 points (27 max total). No cap for postseason tournament.

        10.5.2. Post-Season Tournament Scoring:

            10.5.2.1. Best 2 out of 3 SETS (third set not played if one teams wins BOTH first sets).

            10.5.2.2. First 2 sets RALLY score to 25 (no CAP must win by TWO)

            10.5.2.3. THIRD set (if played) RALLY score to 15 all ages (no CAP must win by TWO)

    10.6. Net serves ARE allowed.

    10.7. Legal contact is a touch of the ball by any part of a player's body that does not allow the ball to come visibly to rest or involve prolonged contact with a player's body.

    10.8. Timeouts – 2 timeouts per set regardless of score. (If accidental extra time out is called it is NOT an automatic point to other team but is instead deemed a "delay of game" and up to then discretion of the ref to assess a penalty or not.

10.9. Libero allowed at 7th and/8th grade L1 and L2 level only- see Libero Rules, below, and for Silver and Gold 7th/8th grade bracket in the post-season tournament.

10.10. Grades 3 and 4 may only serve four (4) consecutive points; offensive team must rotate after the fourth serve won by a server but will continue to serve until side out by other team, with each player serving the max number for that age.

10.11. Grade 5 may only serve eight (8) consecutive points; offensive team must rotate after the eighth serve won by a server but will continue to serve until side out by other team, with each player serving the max number for that age.

10.12. **Exception is competitive/Level 1 Grade 5: no limit on serves unless coaches and official agree otherwise.**

10.13. No serve limit at any level for Grades 6, 7 and 8.

10.14. Serving Lines:

10.14.1. 3rd & 4th Grade: move in 15' from the end line

10.14.2. 5th & 6th Grade: move in 10' from the end line

10.14.3. **Exception is 5th and 6th grade Level One will serve from 2 meters in (6ft 6 3/4 inch)**

10.14.4. 7th & 8th Grade: must serve behind the end line all levels.

10.14.5. The serving lines for 3rd-4th grades and 5th-6th grades will be a minimum of 9' in width from the sideline. Every program in the GCCYS is required to comply with the minimum serving line width. The serving lines must be marked with visible floor tape or painted. Programs can choose to exceed the minimum width, but the lines must be marked with visible floor tape or painted.

NOTE: IN CASES WHERE TEAMS ARE "CROSSING OVER" LEVELS (i.e., A LEVEL ONE TEAM IS PLAYING A LEVEL TWO TEAM), THE LOWER LEVEL RULES ON SERVE LIMIT AND SERVING LINE WILL APPLY.

10.15. Balls in play cannot be played off back wall and/or side walls in the gym. If the ball hits a back wall or side wall it is considered out of bounds. This does not include the ceiling. The ground rules for the ceiling will be established by the Referee before each match.

10.16. All grades can either substitute players, or rotate up to 8 players. Teams are permitted to rotate in 1 or 2 players. These players are listed in serving order at the beginning of each set. Server (back right) rotates in from the right side; front left rotates in from the left. Players waiting to rotate onto the court may NOT touch the ball when it is hit at them. Every effort must be made to move away from the ball, judgment will be left up to the referee. TEAMS CHOOSING TO ROTATE CANNOT USE SUBSTITUTION IN THAT SET.

10.17. SUBSTITUTION RULE: 3rd–8th grade is 18 substitutions per set. The first lineup DOES NOT count as an entry.

10.18. The net height from the floor to the top of the net is as follows:

10.17.1. Grades 3 & 4: 6 feet (or lowest setting possible)

10.17.2. Grade 5: 6 feet 6 inches

10.17.3. Grade 6: 7 feet

10.17.4. Grades 7 & 8: 7 feet 4 1/8 inches

10.19. Prior to a match teams are permitted a 5-minute warm-up time. No match will start prior to match time. Grace period for the 1st set is 10 minutes. The 2nd and 3rd set will be 5 minutes. The time between Sets is 2 minutes.

10.20. Game ball will be the referee's choice (color ball may be used) – best ball available. 3rd - 6th grade will use Volley Lite balls, or any similar lightweight ball designed for 12 and under play.

10.21. No jewelry may be worn – including earrings (band aids may not cover them). No face paint, hair paint or glitter. No hard beads or plastic headbands will be permitted. Bobby pins and flat hair clips are permitted as well as any soft headband. Jersey may only be tied back to compensate for size of shirt. Abdomen should not be showing at any time.

11. Division winners are determined by total number of sets won not by the number of matches won. All sets must be played every match.
12. Each team should provide one line person to help the official. The line person should be 18 years or older.
13. Winning team must report scores within 48 hours of the match. Team winning at least two of the three sets is considered the winning team.
14. Every team is automatically entered in the GCCYS postseason tournament. The tournament pairings will be based on records after around the 8th match. If you do not wish to be entered in the tournament you must notify GCCYS a minimum of two weeks prior to the end of the regular season. There will no longer be consolation games played in the season ending tournament.

Libero Rules

1. Available in 7th and 8th grade Level 1 and Level 2 bracket only, teams may choose to utilize the Libero position in the GCCYS Girls Volleyball League. If a Libero is not listed on the line-up sheet for a particular set the team may not use a libero for that set. The Libero must wear a uniform shirt that is immediately recognized from all angles as being in clear contrast to and distinct from the other members of the team.
2. The Libero is restricted to performing as a back-row player and is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere if the moment of contact, the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
3. The Libero may not block or may not attempt to block an opposing team's contact.
4. A teammate may not complete an attack-hit when at the moment of the attack-hit the ball is entirely above the top of the net, if the ball is coming from an overhand finger pass by the Libero in the front zone. Other ball contacts (non fingertip action) are not subject to this restriction.
5. The Libero is allowed to replace any player in a back-row position only. The standard use of the Libero is to replace 1 of the 2 middle blockers in the rotation. The Libero can serve in one position per set or not at all. The Libero can only be replaced by the player who the Libero replaced originally and this is the responsibility of the team utilizing a Libero to track.
6. Replacements involving the Libero are not counted as regular substitutions. These replacements are unlimited. Ideally, each home team should be responsible for supplying a person to track the Libero replacements to ensure that: 1) once the libero is replaced, at least one serve must take place before the libero can replace another player unless the libero is on the court and is replacing the player moving into the serving position (RB) 2) when the libero leaves the court, the player replacing the libero must be the same player that the libero replaced when she last entered the game. However, if the home team does not use the libero player, the school that does use the libero must provide the official libero tracker for the match. This must be clearly established prior to the start of the game in the pre-match meeting with the official.
7. The Libero replacements will be tracked on a separate form (Libero tracking sheet)
8. For a complete list of rules regarding the use of the Libero position please read the NFHS Volleyball Rules regarding this position in its entirety.