

*The MSVBA Rules and Policies appear on the following pages. These have been approved by the Executive Board and are the current rules under which the MSVBA and MSVBA-sanctioned tournaments are operating. Members wishing to propose changes to the Rules and Policies can send them to:*

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**Maine State Volleyball Association Rules and Policies**

**September 2022**

**RULES OF PLAY**

In general, except as specified below, the Maine State Volleyball Association (MSVBA) follows the rules of USA Volleyball (USAV).

**UNIFORMS**

Team uniforms must comply with USAV Rule 4.3, with the following exceptions:

1. Jerseys, shorts, and socks need not be of uniform color
2. Duplicate numbers are strongly discouraged, but may be allowed if the jerseys have distinctly contrasting colors
3. If a Libero is used, the Libero’s jersey must be of contrasting color with all other jerseys on the team.

Teams or players that do not have proper uniform numbers may borrow legal shirts or buy them from MSVBA, if offered at that tournament. If done prior to the start of their first match, there is no penalty. If getting legal uniforms would significantly delay the start of match, then the team may play with a ghost player or forfeit matches until the uniforms are legal. If the uniforms are not made legal, then the team may participate in pool or round robin play, but will not be eligible for playoffs.

**GHOST PLAYERS**

Teams may play with a ghost player, except at MSVBA Championships and Qualifiers. The ghost player must appear on the line-up, be maintained in the rotation and a side out awarded when the ghost player rotates to the service position. Teams must have a minimum of five (5) players on the court.

When teams start a tournament with a ghost player, the non-ghost players must conform to the ratings limit for the tournament, i.e., they must not average more than 1⁄2 point above the tournament level. To calculate the roster value of the ghost, the total roster point cap shall be divided by 6 and rounded to the nearest whole number (rounding up for 1/2 points). Example: in a C tournament, the total roster point cap is 21 points. The ghost is worth 21/6 = 3.5, which is rounded up to 4. Thus, the remaining five players must not exceed 17 points.

If a team has only six players and a player becomes injured and must leave the game, a ghost player may be substituted for the player under the provisions of the “exceptional substitution” rule of the USAV rules. This ghost player’s rating will be equal to that of the injured player.

Teams playing with a ghost player may participate in the playoffs.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

Substitutions will follow the USAV substitution rule. Exceptional substitution will be allowed in the case of injuries. The injured player may not return for the remainder of that set. If a player is substituted under the exceptional substitution rules more than once for the same injury during tournament play, the tournament director may suspend that player from competition for the remainder of the tournament, or until such time that the player has demonstrated that s/he may return to play without possibility of further injury.

**TEAM AFFILIATIONS**

Individuals in MSVBA may play on as many different teams as they desire during the season (but only one per division).

**INDIVIDUAL RATINGS**

All players in MSVBA will be rated for their individual skill level, in a range from A+ (highest) to D (lowest). An individual’s overall rating evaluates their ability relative to other players in New England in each of the basic skills of the game: serving, passing, setting, hitting effectiveness, blocking, and digging/defense.

Players with an existing NERVA/Yankee Rating will carry that rating into MSVBA, but the player will still be eligible for a spot rate during their first MSVBA tournament.

Initially, new members will rate themselves when filling out their membership application. Teammates or their team captains should be expected to help new members determine their appropriate rating level. Renewing members will be assigned the same rating as they carried at the end of their previous membership year. New members or renewing members that have not played in a tournament in the past two seasons are eligible to be spot rated.

Any MSVBA member can request a ratings review for him/herself or recommend a ratings review for other members. All requested or recommended ratings reviews will be evaluated by the Ratings Chair, or their designated representatives. If a ratings change is warranted, the Ratings Committee will notify the member in writing or in person, 14 days before the change is effective so that individuals and teams can adjust. The notification time starts when the outreach is made and not when the individual acknowledges receipt. It is the member’s responsibility to notify their captain/teammates of their new rating even if it has not been updated on the MSVBA website.

Any player designated as eligible for a spot rate can be immediately spot rated by the Tournament Ratings Committee which is to be appointed prior to the first match of the tournament. If the spot rate causes a team's total rating to exceed the tournament maximum, the team will be disqualified from the playoffs.

For purposes of calculating individual and team ratings, each rating level will have a numerical equivalent: A+ = 10, A = 9, A- = 8, B+ = 7, B = 6, B- = 5, C+ = 4, C = 3, C- = 2, D = 1.

**TEAM RATINGS**

For participation in tournaments, a team rating will be calculated by totaling the individual ratings of the top six (6) players on each team’s roster for that tournament; for coed, reverse coed, or coed combo tournaments, the ratings of the top three men and the top three women on the roster will be counted. The maximum and minimum number of ratings points allowed for each level of competition shall be:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D |
| **Maximum** | 51 | 45 | 39 | 33 | 27 | 21 | 15 | 9 |
| **Minimum** | 44 | 38 | 32 | 26 | 20 | 14 | 8 | 6 |

Teams that are over the ratings limit for that tournament due to a spot rate will be permitted to participate in pool or round robin play, but will not be eligible for playoffs. Their games will count as wins/losses for their opponents. If the roster is changed to one that is within the limit prior to the start of the first match, then there is no penalty. If the rating violation is determined after a team has begun play and they decide to change to a legal roster, any games already played or started will be forfeited, unless the roster is changed by deleting a player who has not played, in which case, there is no penalty. The team will then be allowed to continue play and be eligible for playoffs.

Individuals may not play in tournaments that are more than three (3) levels below their individual rating (i.e. “A-“players may play in a “B-” tournament, but not in a “C+” tournament).

For purposes of calculating team ratings, the ratings of women playing in men’s tournaments will be adjusted as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Women’s Rating** | **Equivalent Rating** | **Ratings Points** |
| A+ | B+ | 7 |
| A | B | 6 |
| B+ | B- | 5 |
| B | B- | 5 |
| B- | C+ | 4 |
| C+ | C | 3 |
| C | C- | 2 |
| C- | D | 1 |
| D | D | 1 |

**TOURNAMENTS**

**Divisions and Levels of Competition**

MSVBA tournaments will be sanctioned for Men’s, Women’s, Juniors, Coed, Reverse Coed, and Combo (Coed plus Reverse) categories. Levels of competition will be from A- through D, inclusive. The specification of a Category and Level (i.e., Women’s B+, etc.) shall be a Division of play.

**Sanctioning & Scheduling Tournaments**

All MSVBA tournaments must be sanctioned and scheduled by the MSVBA Tournament Coordinator. In order to qualify for sanctioning, tournaments must comply with the following conditions:

1. All participants must be members of NERVA/MSVBA, and the USAV. If a player’s USAV membership is from outside the NERVA region, they must still have paid the MSVBA/NERVA portion of the dual membership fee in order to participate in MSVBA tournaments.
2. All referees, whether non-playing or playing, must be USAV-certified referees and MSVBA/NERVA members, except at Friendship tournaments, as specified below. The head referee must be a non-playing referee.
3. The current MSVBA ratings must be used for all individual and team rating calculations. These ratings appear on the official MSVBA Registrar’s list and are updated by the MSVBA Executive Board. Members can access this list via the MSVBA website.
4. All current MSVBA rules must be adhered to and enforced.

**Registration for Tournaments**

Tournaments are open for registration 30 days prior to the tournament date. If a last-minute tournament is scheduled and it is inside 30 days, it will be open for registration as soon as it is announced. Registration for a tournament is done by submitting an online payment per the directions posted for that tournament. Teams are listed in order of registration determined by the online posted time stamp.

All tournament registration payments received within the first 48 hours after a tournament announcement shall be placed into a random drawing if the number of entries exceed the number of tournament spots available. Remaining registrations shall be placed on the wait list in the order drawn.

Captains/teams are required to post at least 5 of their 6 roster spots, on the tournament forum, 10 days prior to the tournament date. In the event a team has not posted 5 players 10 days prior to the tournament, the first team on the waitlist will be offered the spot if they can post 5 players and so on until all team spots are filled. A full roster needs to be posted the Wednesday before the tournament. If there are any last-minute changes, they need to be relayed to the Tournament Coordinator as soon as possible, and prior to the start time of the tournament.

**Rosters**

Team Representatives are responsible for making sure an up-to-date team roster has been submitted to the MSVBA Representative or Tournament Director prior to the team’s first match of the day. The roster should list team members’ names, uniform numbers, and MSVBA/Yankee ratings.

Rosters are frozen at the start of the team’s third set of the day. Prior to the start of a team’s third set, players can be dropped if they have not played and can be added if they have not played for another team at that tournament. If changes must be made to the roster after they are initially submitted, the MSVBA Rep or Tournament Director must be notified or the roster change will be disallowed.

Team rosters will be posted by the MSVBA Rep or Tournament Director for players to view during the day’s competition.

Non-members may play upon paying the non-members’ registration fee for that day’s tournament play only. This fee may be applied to a full year membership at a later date during the same membership year. This fee will only entitle the non-member to play and be placed on the MSVBA ratings list.

**MSVBA Representative**

The Secretary or his/her appointed MSVBA Representative (which may be the Tournament Director or Registrar) will be responsible for checking team rosters for memberships and rating, collecting membership applications and fees, and ensuring that MSVBA Rules & Policies are followed.

**Tournament Schedule of Play**

The Tournament Director in conjunction with the Tournament Coordinator is responsible for determining the format, but these will usually be either pool play or round robins followed by playoffs. The format must allow for the following:

1. Teams qualifying for playoffs, but tied for position, shall be assigned position by the following methods, in order of priority:

1st – won/lost record between tied teams;

2nd – point spread between tied teams;

3rd – total point spread in pool or round robin competition;

4th – coin flip;

If there are more teams tied for the playoffs then there are positions, the tied teams must compete for the position(s) in further direct competition. Teams should not be eliminated from playoffs by point differential or other non-competition systems. Teams may play 25 or 15 point sets to break ties at the discretion of the tournament director.

1. Teams qualifying for playoffs, but tied for position, shall be assigned position by the following methods, in order of priority:
   1. won/lost record between tied teams;
   2. point spread between tied teams;
   3. total point spread in pool or round robin competition;
   4. coin flip.
2. If two teams are tied for one position then they will play a single tie breaker set. If there are three or more teams tied for one position, use the above tie breaker methods to determine a play-in seed. If there are an odd number of teams then the highest seed will get the bye. The other two teams play with the winner playing the bye team for the last playoff spot. For even number of teams the highest seed shall play the lowest seed, second highest seed will play the second lowest seed, and so on. The winning teams will play until a single team is determined, using the bye when necessary.
3. If two teams are tied for one position then they will play a single tie breaker set. If there are three or more teams tied for one position, use the above tie breaker methods to determine a play-in seed. If there are an odd number of teams then the highest seed will get the bye. The other two teams play with the winner playing the bye team for the last playoff spot. For even number of teams the highest seed shall play the lowest seed, second highest seed will play the second lowest seed, and so on. The winning teams will play until a single team is determined, using the bye when necessary.
4. If three teams tie for two playoff positions the team with the greater point spread shall be awarded one playoff position the other two teams should play one set for the remaining playoff position. If a tie shall exist in point spread a coin flip shall determine a bye team and all teams must play for position as follows. The non bye teams play with the winner taking one playoff position and the loser playing the bye team for the other playoff position. The tie breaking procedure from above will be used to determine the winning teams’ playoff seed. Participating teams are expected to furnish support officials as requested including an R2 (and R1 in friendship tournaments), Scorer, and two Linespersons. Unless otherwise specified, the lowest placed team(s) not making it to playoffs will work the first round of playoffs. In subsequent rounds, the losing teams will work, with the last losing semifinal team working the final.
5. Except for discriminatory practices based on race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or religious belief, tournament directors will have the right to set their own policies for acceptance of teams in their tournaments. Some factors affecting acceptance might be order of payment received, previous history of reliability or non-payment, etc.
6. A protest committee will be formed at the beginning of each tournament to vote on any potential protests that might arise during play for that day. This committee should consist of the head referee, tournament director, and at least one team representative and always consist of an odd number.
7. MSVBA prohibits the use or possession of drugs and alcohol at all tournaments. Failure to adhere to those rules is considered a serious breach of the code of conduct and is subject to significant penalty.
8. Expulsions, disqualifications, and other incidents at tournaments will be reported by the Tournament Director and/or Head Referee to the Executive Board for consideration of further action.

**Mixed Gender**

All rules follow USAV Mixed Gender Rules with the following exceptions:

Reverse coed with back row attack (and the women's net portion of a co-ed reverse) allows all men to attack the ball from behind the 3 meter line when the ball is above the height of the net. All men are considered back row players. A jump serve is not considered an attack.

NEW: The male does not have to touch the ball during play. The female can put it over on the second or third hit even if it has not been touched by a male. Please keep in mind, only female players may block in reverse coed volleyball. If the rotation is such that only one female is located in the front row, a second female from the back row may come forward to block, but not to hit.

The remaining female player in the back row must stay behind the attack line until contact is made with the ball by one of the two blockers or the ball is hit in a way that does not allow for blocking to occur.

**Fees**

Fees for individual tournaments shall be established by the Tournament Coordinator.

**Friendship Tournaments**

Friendship Tournaments shall be allowed through December 31, concurrent with the regional USAV Friendship Season, in order to promote early season competition. Friendship tournaments must still be sanctioned and scheduled through the MSVBA Tournament Coordinator and all participants must be MSVBA members and the ratings limits are in effect. The differences from regular tournaments are that requirements for USAV-certified referees are waived for Friendship Tournaments and tournament directors may decide to forego prizes.

**REFEREES**

1. All First Referees (R1) at MSVBA-sanctioned tournaments must be USAV-certified referees, except at Friendship tournaments. A Player Referee is defined as a USAV certified referee that is also playing in the tournament.
2. The Head Referee must be a non-playing referee. Tournament Directors will ensure that no less than one non-playing referee per court is assigned for any MSVBA-sanctioned tournament except Friendship Tournaments. Other referees may be player-refs.
3. All non-playing referees will be assigned by the Referee Coordinator. Tournament directors planning to use player-referees must inform the Referee Coordinator of their plans and officiating requirements.

**Referee Compensation**

Compensation for referees will be the same as paid for USAV referees in the New England region or as negotiated with the Maine Association of Volleyball Officials. The Referee Coordinator will inform the Tournament Coordinator of the current rates at the beginning of each season.

Player-referees will be compensated for work as R1 at a rate specified by the Referee Coordinator.

**MSVBA QUALIFIERS & CHAMPIONSHIPS**

At the end of each season, the MSVBA may organize and run Qualifiers & Championships at each level of competition that has had participation during the year and which draws sufficient entries to justify a tournament.

For levels of competition where there are more entries than can be reasonably handled in a single tournament, there will be preliminary Qualifying tournaments to determine those teams which will participate in the Championship Tournament. At any given level, the Qualifying and Championship tournaments will be considered as a single tournament for roster-eligibility determinations.

The year-end Championships and Qualifying Tournaments will be run by the same rules as regular season tournaments except:

1. No ghost players will be allowed. Teams must have six players on the court at all times.
2. Players may only appear on one team roster for each level of competition.
3. Teams that are over or under the ratings limit are not permitted to participate.
4. New members, including those who joined after the deadline for Championship applications, may be immediately spot rated, even during the course of the tournament, by the appointed MSVBA Tournament Director or Ratings Chairman.
5. Only full members will be allowed to compete. Single tournament registrations will not be accepted.

**Rosters**

Rosters must be submitted prior to a team’s commencing play at the Championships or any necessary Qualifying tournament. The maximum and minimum ratings levels in effect for regular season shall be in effect for championships.

For divisions where there is a qualifying and championship tournament, teams are allowed to include one player on their roster who is not at the Qualifier and clearly identify that player as a substitute for the finals. This player will not count for the team ratings limit at the Qualifying tournament, but the teams at both Qualifier and Finals must still be within the limits.

**REVISION HISTORY**

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| **Revision Date** | **Author** | **Change Summary** |
| 1/10/2015 | Jason Burks | Added 48-hour drawing rule when more registrations are received than spots available. Page 5, Paragraph 2. |
| 9/7/2022 | Samantha Commeau | Added that a Yankee player should use their existing rating but they are still eligible for a spot rate. Modified language from “immediate rerate” to “spot rate” for member clarify. |
| 9/7/2022 | Samantha Commeau | Updated the communication of ratings changes to be completed by anyone on the ratings committee rather than just the Chair. Also modified the notification of a ratings change from “approximately two weeks” to “14 days.” |
| 9/7/2022 | Samantha Commeau | Tournaments will be open for registration 30 days prior to the tournament date. Registration can no longer be completed by check and will need to be done online. |
| 9/7/2022 | Samantha Commeau | A full roster needs to be posted to the MSVBA website the Wednesday before the tournament. |
| 9/7/2022 | Samantha Commeau | RCO Gender rule was eliminated |
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