



# **Co-Ed Indoor Volleyball League Rulebook and General Information**

## Purpose and Scope of This Document

This Rulebook and Registration Information booklet is intended to give all participants a broad overview of how the league operates and explain most rules and procedures that govern the league. This document is not intended to cover every last detail. Many additional details for the league will be disseminated via e-mail and on the Club website, so please check both frequently. If you have a SPAM filter on your e-mail, please add [patrick@madisonssc.com](mailto:patrick@madisonssc.com) to your list of safe senders to ensure you receive all e-mails pertaining to the league. This is the only e-mail address from which e-mails regarding the league will come.

## Code of Conduct

Madison Sports and Social Club does not tolerate discrimination, racism, sexual harassment, unwelcome sexual advances, violence, threats, or any other type of behavior that may make any player or official feel uncomfortable or threaten his or her health and well-being. We expect all players to treat everyone with respect and abide by common standards of decency and good sportsmanship.

Team names must not be offensive toward any race, nationality, gender identity, or any other group of individuals. They must not contain profanity. Please use tact and common sense when choosing a team name. MSSC reserves the right to reject any team name it finds offensive. You will be asked to supply a new name in the event your team name is deemed inappropriate.

**Players will read and understand the rules.** They are sent to all roster players prior to the season and are available on the MSSC website as well. Not reading rules is the single biggest cause of problems in our leagues. If players have a question about the application of any given rule, they can ask an official during a break in play or after a game if time allows. They will not argue calls with officials or ask to have rules explained to them during play unless an official feels an explanation is necessary before play continues. Officials are human and make mistakes and MSSC does not tolerate abuse of its officials.

All participants must refrain from threatening, taunting, name-calling, put-downs, intimidation, violence, harassment, and other inappropriate behavior toward teammates, opponents, and officials. Everyone makes mistakes, and we will not tolerate criticism or intimidation of anyone involved with our leagues due to differences in skill level or any other factor. Coaching, tips, and helpful hints are welcome, provided they are relayed in a constructive and friendly manner. Any player making an offensive comment to another individual is subject to ejection at the umpire's discretion.

All players are encouraged to report offensive behavior to the Club President, Patrick Fosdick, via e-mail at [patrick@madisonssc.com](mailto:patrick@madisonssc.com). All reports will be kept anonymous and taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary, including, but not limited to warnings, suspension, and removal of the offending individual(s) from league play.

## Registration and General League Information

- Registration is only available on our website (<http://www.madisonssc.com>).
- Registration generally closes one week prior to the start date. All leagues have a capacity. We will close registration for teams if a league reaches capacity before the cutoff date
- The Team Captain has the option to divide up the team fee amongst his or her team members using TeamPayer through MSSC website. This service allows the Captain to assign an amount to each player, who will then receive an e-mail from the captain requesting the amount. There is a \$2 fee per transactions, whereas other options like Venmo are free. Any amounts not paid in full by the second week of the season may be charged to the Captain's credit card at any time
- Following the regular season, an appropriate postseason structure will be established. In general, all teams will play in the postseason with the following exceptions:
  - Any team forfeiting two or more regular season matches may be left out of postseason play at MSSC's discretion
  - If time or space constraints arise, teams may be left out of playoff brackets to allow completion of the league in a timely and/or efficient manner. Depending on the reason for the exclusion, a team may be refunded for a missed match. This is rarely necessary, but may occur from time to time
    - Example: The bottom two teams in the regular season standings may play one final match against each other, but this match will not be a part of the playoff bracket
  - Any team determined to have exhibited extremely poor sportsmanship or other conduct detrimental to the league on a regular basis may be left out of postseason play at MSSC's discretion. Refunds will NOT be issued to any teams under these circumstances, as this is a violation of our Code of Conduct
  - Any team who does not wish to participate in the playoffs may be excluded at the captain's request. There is no requirement to participate in the playoffs. Captains must contact us to inform us if their team chooses to opt out of the playoffs
- If a team wins the first two games/sets of a playoff match, the referee has discretion to call the match at that point if time constraints arise

## Prizes

Prizes will be announced in the playoff email that goes out to all registered participants. In the past they've generally included gift cards to sponsor bars or "cash" prizes that can be applied to a future season or processed as refunds to the captain. Prizes are subject to change any given season. We only award prizes to the first and second place teams in the entire league and do not award prizes in each division if there are multiple divisions.

## Team Shirts

MSSC provides t-shirts for all teams. Colors are assigned on a first requested, first awarded basis, with the exception of returning teams. Returning teams may keep the same color they wore in the previous session if they wish. The previous session is defined as the same sport, same night of the week, and the

session that immediately preceded the one for which the team is registering. The captain needs to note this during registration or e-mail the league with the request to use existing shirts

## Rules and Regulations

### 1. General Rules

- A. All matches in the league shall be governed by the rules outlined herein
- B. This is a co-ed recreational league. All players are expected to show good sportsmanship and act appropriately toward team members and opponents at all times
- C. Players must respect the authority of the referees to regulate the game and abide by their decisions. Referees have the authority to eject players from the match for detrimental conduct. All decisions of the referees are final. Any situations not specifically covered in the rules are up to the discretion of the referee or a representative of MSSC
- D. Rules are subject to change and clarification by MSSC at any time. Any rule changes or clarifications will be communicated to all registered participants via e-mail
- E. Teams may warm up prior to their matches in areas outside the court boundaries if space allows. Any team warming up who interferes with an active game will forfeit the right to warm up for the remainder of the evening. This situation will largely be referee discretion
- F. Teams are allowed one 60 second time out per match, which can be used at any dead ball

### 2. Team Size, Rosters, Subs, Forfeits, etc.

- A. A standard team will consist of six players on the court per team, at least two of whom must be female. Teams may play with as few as four players, including two females. If a team is not able to field four players (including at least two females), they will forfeit unless the opponent agrees to let them play shorthanded
  - If one team decides to take a forfeit win, this must be decided on and both captains must sign to acknowledge the forfeit before the match begins
  - A forfeit match is recorded as a 3-0 win for the team that did not forfeit. Keep this in mind since set wins are a tiebreaker in the standings
- B. If a player leaves a match for any reason and no substitute is available, play may proceed as long as there are still at least four players present (including at least 2 females)
- C. If a team is not ready to play at five minutes past the scheduled start time, a forfeit may be declared by the referee
- D. A player must specifically identify as a female in order to count toward the minimum number of females required to be present during play for purposes of co-ed participation. The rest of the team can be any number of males and/or non-binary individuals
- E. It is the responsibility of the team captain to communicate with the umpire regarding team composition when it comes to co-ed participation rules. The captain must make the umpire aware of any situations in which the identity of any given player(s) could be misconstrued
- F. Teams who no-show matches or do not show up with at least four players may be charged a forfeit fee according the policies detailed here:  
<https://madisonssc.leaguelab.com/page/forfeitfees>
- G. In general, teams may use whoever they want for subs. In leagues that have multiple divisions, players may not sub for a team that is in a division below the one they actually

play in without opponent consent. In the playoffs, teams may not use players from other teams in the league at all unless the opponent consents

### 3. Equipment

- A. All game equipment will be provided by MSSC and the facilities where games are held. MSSC supplies balls, but a ball brought by either team may be used if both teams agree
  - MSSC does not supply warm up balls. If you want to ensure you have a ball to warm up, please bring your own
- B. Players must bring and wear clean shoes in all indoor gyms. We jeopardize our ability to rent facilities if players are tracking in snow, salt, dirt, etc.**

### 4. The Court and General Game Play

- A. The court will consist of one standard volleyball court, measuring approximately 60 feet in length by 30 feet in width. The net will generally be at men's height unless there are equipment limitations at any given facility
- B. Gyms vary greatly in size. Smaller gyms may have very limited areas outside of the court lines to play balls and many times have obstructions on the walls or ceilings, such as ropes and basketball hoops
  - a. Referees have discretion to not call foot faults on serves in small gyms due to limited space to serve
- B. All matches will begin with a rock-paper-scissors duel between the two captains and overseen by the referee. The winner of the rock-paper-scissors duel may choose to serve first or choose the side of the court on which his or her team will begin the match. The serve will alternate each set
- C. Any ball that hits the court boundary line is in bounds
- D. Antennas are out of bounds. A serve or hit must be within the antennas to be legal. Balls that hit the antenna are out of bounds and result in a point for the opponent. Most courts don't have antennas, and referees are allowed to use their discretion to call balls that are clearly outside of where the antennas would be
- D. For leagues that have multiple courts and no divider between the courts: The referee may stop play if a ball from another match comes on to the court and poses a safety risk to players or otherwise interferes with game play. A ball that comes onto the court, does not interfere with the play, and is immediately removed will not stop play. These situations are referee discretion, as every occurrence is different.
- E. Teams will switch sides after the completion of each set
- F. MSSC leagues tend to adjust the officiating to the level of play. In "lower" skill level matches (C/D level), referees generally call a looser game, as many players are not highly skilled and are likely just there to have fun. Constant whistles would take away from the experience for all players involved. Referees are expected to call a tight match at the B level and higher
- H. Teams may warm up before matches if there is time before the match starts. Some facilities have room to warm up outside of the playing area and some do not. There is no requirement to allow players to warm up

## 5. Officials

- A. All matches will be officiated by an impartial referee supplied by MSSC. The referee governs all game playing issues and has authority for final rulings and situations not specifically covered in the rulebook. Players must understand that referees are not perfect and will not see everything

## 6. Serving

- A. All players must wait for the referee's whistle or other signal before serving and must serve within ten seconds of the signal. The referee has discretion to award a point to the opponent if a player takes too long to serve
- B. Players must be behind the end line when they make contact with the ball on a serve
  - As mentioned earlier, the referee has discretion to avoid calling foot faults in small gyms due to limited space to serve
- C. Jump serves are permitted in any league containing all B level or higher teams (if space permits). They're allowed in any match if both captains agree to allow them
- D. A serve that hits the net but still goes over is a live ball
- E. Players may rotate in at any position provided it is always the same position. For example: some teams prefer to rotate in at outside hitter opposite the service position to warm up before serving. There still must be at least two females on the court when players rotate in
  - Teams are allowed to "double sub" (i.e. have two players go in and two players go out) at each rotation if they wish. This must be done on opposite sides of the court so players do not skip a spot in rotation
- F. Players are allowed to set a serve
- G. Players may not block or otherwise "attack" a serve as it crosses the net. In general, this means a player cannot play the ball until it drops below the tape on the top of the net

## 7. Hitting, volleys, and returning a serve

- A. There may be no more than three hits per side before the ball must cross back over the net. No player may hit the ball twice in a row – this includes balls that hit ceilings. The only exception is a block at the net. The blocking player may play the ball again
- B. There are no gender requirements on who must hit the ball before it crosses back over the net
- C. Players may not go under the net or hit the net. Long hair hitting the net is not a violation. "Under the net" is defined as a foot or substantial portion of the body crossing the line underneath the net. Violation of this rule results in a point for the other team. This violation is largely referee discretion
- D. A ball that hits an obstruction above the court (ceiling, basketball hoop, light, fan, or anything attached to the ceiling) can be played as long as it does not give the hitting team an advantage in the referee's opinion. The simplest definition of this rule is that if the ball hits an object, it must be hit again by a player on that team before crossing the net
- E. Balls that hit walls, bleachers, or anything attached to the wall are considered dead. Balls that hit a basketball net with no visible change in trajectory are still live balls

1. Players are not allowed to jump up against or otherwise “climb” a wall or set of bleachers in an attempt to play a ball. This poses a danger to that player, other players, and referees
- F. Standard rules apply in terms of illegal contact: lifts, carries, double contact, etc. will result in a point for the opponent. The ball may be played off any part of the body provided normal rules of contact are not broken
- H. MSSC leagues use the ten-foot line, provided the facility has it marked. No player in the back row may spike or attack in front of the ten-foot line. A player in the back row must start behind the ten-foot line when spiking or attacking the ball

## **8. Scoring**

- A. Each match will consist of three sets, with the winner of two of the three sets getting the victory. All three may be played if time permits. Scores from all three sets will count for tiebreaker purposes in the standings
- B. The league uses rally scoring - i.e. a point is scored after every legal serve
- C. Sets are played to 21 points as much as possible, and a team must win by two points. There is a cap at 25 points however – the first team to 25 wins regardless of the score. If matches are running long, the referee has discretion to play the third set to 15 with a hard cap at 18. In general, if there are 15 or more minutes before the next match, the third set should be played to 21

## **Miscellaneous Administrative Rules and Notes**

- MSSC encourages Free Agents (or players without a team) to register. Leagues almost always have capacity limits, so full teams will be placed first, followed by Free Agents in the order they registered
- Free Agents are welcome to form teams on their own or request to play with friends, otherwise they will be assigned to a team by MSSC
- Club management reserves the right to alter the setup of the league at any time before or during the season
- All players must complete waivers. This is done as a part of accepting the e-mail invite from the team captain prior to the beginning of the season. Teams in violation of roster and/or waiver policies are subject to forfeiting games at MSSC’s discretion

## **End of the Match**

At the completion of each match, the score card will be submitted to MSSC as proof of the final score. All players are expected to shake hands and otherwise show good sportsmanship, regardless of the final score or any disagreements or situations that may have arisen during the match.

## **Results and Standings**

Results and standings will be posted on the Volleyball page of the MSSC website (<http://www.madisonssc.com>) following receipt of the official scores from each match.

## **Cancellation Policy**

Matches may be postponed or canceled due to dangerous weather. If facilities are closed any given day due to weather, our reservations are cancelled and we cannot play. We occasionally run into situations where school employees don't talk to each other and we arrive at the school to find out the gym is in use for a school function that night. We won't be able to use the gym if this happens, and matches will need to be rescheduled. **Cancellations will be e-mailed to all registered players if possible and posted on the MSSC website.**

## **Good Sportsmanship**

The final section of the rules and regulations of the league will reiterate what was stated at the beginning of this document: The purpose of our volleyball league is first and foremost to have fun. Winning should always come second. All participants must realize that not all players will be on the same skill level, and that there may be vast differences in skill level between members of the same team or between two teams in the league. Boasting, bragging, taunting, verbally abusing, or otherwise putting down other players will not be tolerated. The referees and/or a representative of MSSC reserve the right to issue warnings, penalties, and ejections if any of the above-mentioned behavior becomes too severe. Winning may be important to you, but good sportsmanship must take priority over wins and losses.