



**Berkshire Volleyball Association
League Rules
2025 – 2026**

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Introduction

These rules describe local rules and administrative arrangements for the operation of the Berkshire Volleyball Association Leagues, under the auspices of the Berkshire Volleyball Association (BVA). Where not otherwise specified Volleyball England (VE), the National Governing Body, rules and policies for the National Volleyball League (NVL) will apply. The BVA Committee reserves the right to issue amendments or clarifications to these rules as necessary.

Where fees or fines are referred to in the rules these are detailed in the associated Schedule of Fees and Fines as advertised on the BVA Website. The amounts will be determined by the AGM each year.

All changes (additions / amendments / deletions) to these rules must be voted upon during the AGM.

1 Registration and pre-season arrangements

1.1 Volleyball England registration

Clubs wishing to participate in BVA competitions must be [affiliated to Volleyball England](#). Non-affiliated teams put their opponents at risk by being uninsured. Clubs who have registered an interest in playing in the Berkshire Volleyball Association Leagues and are not recorded by VE as being affiliated at the beginning of the BVA League season will receive a written warning from the Committee.

Failure to affiliate within the time limit specified in the warning may lead to the club being barred from the League and other BVA competitions. As of the 2024/25 season, membership and competitions will be managed on VolleyZone (VZ), VE's online platform for organisation of volleyball competitions.

1.1a BVA registration

Clubs wishing to participate in BVA Competitions must be registered with the BVA.

1.2 League entry

In order to compete in the BVA Leagues each team must, before the published closing date, have:

- Applied for team entry on VZ.
- As part of the team registration process each player is required to sign up to the Volleyball England Player code of Conduct this is done when you register/renew your membership on VZ.
- Paid the Annual League Subscription to the BVA. Where the closing date is likely to cause problems for any club or team, requests for deferral of payment may be made to the BVA Committee, providing that such requests are received well in advance of the entry closing date.
- Paid the specified Goodwill Deposit to the BVA. The Goodwill Deposit is held by the BVA in order to guarantee payment of any fines that may be imposed during the course of the season. It is refunded when a team withdraws from the League at the end of a season, provided that no unpaid fines or fees are outstanding. The Goodwill Deposit will be doubled for re-entry into the League where a team has defaulted on more than one fixture during the previous season.

1.3 League structure

The BVA usually runs four volleyball Leagues:

1. **Men's**, in which men, women, or juniors may play.
2. **Women's**, in which only women and female juniors.
3. **Mixed**, in which there must be a maximum of three male players (adult and/or junior) on court at all times. A team playing with liberos or fewer than six players, including when using a phantom player, must still comply with the maximum of three male players on court rule.
4. **Juniors**, in which Junior males or females who are U16 on 31st August prior to the start of the season may play.

In the Junior League, teams may be made up of both male & female players. Whilst VE / BVA rules and protocols apply to this League, referees and officials are expected to use their discretion on where to apply leniency due to player ability and player development, for example, where the serve is taken a player may serve within the boundary of the court however if they choose to serve behind the service line then the player will be subject to the service rules.

In the Junior League it is permissible for the first referee not to be qualified, however it is expected that they will be supervised and advised by their team coach. Numbered team strips are preferable but not essential.

Due to the number of Junior participants available, Non-Junior players (Helpers) may participate however they do so with the following restrictions:

- A Junior team must consist of at least 3 junior players on court at any time.
- Helpers are not permitted to block, hit, or over-head serve.

Please be aware that the premise of the Junior League is primarily for Junior players and to encourage participation and development. Helpers should only be used when Junior players are not available.

Male and female players are defined by their sex recorded at birth, consistent with VE policy.

The number of divisions within each League may vary from season to season and will be determined by the Committee at the beginning of each season. Factors considered include the League position of the teams from the previous season, including relegation and promotion, the number of teams entering the League, and to achieve a balanced number of fixtures for all teams.

The decision shall be made by a majority of whoever is available of the whole BVA committee including clubs: at a short notice online meeting (invitations out before 1pm on the same day) as soon as the decision needs to be made.

1.4a Player registration

During a season, no player may play for more than one club in a given League unless they are officially transferred, although they may play for different clubs in different Leagues (e.g. Men's and Mixed).

After a player is on a club's roster (with the players agreement), a player may transfer once during a season, providing that the transfer takes place prior to 1st February, and that the Competitions Secretary is notified in advance of playing for the new club and is satisfied that the club they are leaving is not left unable to put out a competitive team due to the transfer. (The commitment of the player to the club needs to mirror the commitment the club is making in entering a team for that season.)

All players, referees, and other individuals that are involved in the game must be registered on VZ for their club(s).

The creation of a second "public use account" is not permitted and any player doing so will be ineligible to play in any of the BVA competitions.

1.4b Team registration

All teams that have been accepted into the League must create a Team Roster in VZ; this is the list of all players that will be playing for that team.

A Team Roster must have at least one “coaching” role assigned as Team Secretary by the time the draft fixtures are released. This is required to enable communications about any fixture changes.

Players can only be registered on one Roster per competition. Clubs must create one Team Roster per team entered into the BVA competitions. A single Roster per club will not be accepted.

A minimum of six players must be registered on each Team Roster two weeks before the first match of the season.

Players can be added to the Roster until the 1st January. After this date, any additions need to be authorised by the relevant Competition Secretary.

1.4c Referee registration

All referees that officiate in the BVA competitions must register on VZ as a referee. This is to ensure that only authorised individuals will be able to enter and amend results.

A list of referees registered on VZ that will officiate per team must be provided to berkshirevolleyballassociation@gmail.com two weeks before the first match of the season.

It is permitted that up to three nominated team referees enter the result on behalf of the actual referee at the game.

1.5 Fixtures

Teams are required to use VZ to finalise their draft fixtures (venue and start time).

Any changes from the draft fixture dates are only permitted with the approval of the relevant competition lead.

The BVA website shows the fixtures (either the original draft fixture or the final approved fixture) and should be used as the official record.

1.5 Playing up or playing down

A club which enters more than one team in a League must rank the teams in order of ability (1st, 2nd, etc). The order of ranking need not necessarily appear in the team name, but must be notified to the Competition Secretary. Each team must then provide a list of named players to the Competition Secretary in advance of the first match. Players not notified in advance will be deemed registered for a team the first time they appear on a scoresheet.

Players may play for teams other than their own under the following conditions:

- Players from a lower ranked team may play up for a higher ranked team for up to 5 team sheets without transferring.
- Players from a higher team may play down for up to 5 team sheets without transferring. A maximum of two players who are playing down may be on court for a

team at any one time. Players playing up or down must be notified to the officials at the match and recorded on the scoresheet in the remarks section.

- A player who plays up for more than 5 team sheets for a higher ranked team is considered to have transferred to the higher ranked team and must be moved to the higher ranked team's roster before playing again. Any player transferred in this manner is prohibited from subsequently playing down for a lower ranked team for the remainder of that season. If a player who has been transferred in this manner subsequently plays down for a lower ranked team, the lower ranked team is considered to have fielded an ineligible player.
- A player who plays down for more than 5 team sheets for a lower ranked team is considered to have transferred to the lower ranked team and must be moved to the lower ranked team's roster before playing again. Any player transferred in this manner is prohibited from subsequently playing up for a higher ranked team for the remainder of that season. If a player who has been transferred in this manner subsequently plays up for a higher ranked team the higher ranked team is considered to have fielded an ineligible player.

If notification of the transfer was not received in advance by the Competitions Secretary, or if the transfer would be otherwise illegal (for example, the player has already transferred clubs under Rule 1.4a), then the team is considered to have fielded an ineligible player.

1.6 National League players

The numbers of registered National League players that may be on court for a team at any one time are limited by division as follows:

- In the top men's and women's division for any League, a maximum of two registered National League (NVL Division 2 or higher) players on court at any one time.
- In the top mixed division, a maximum of two registered National League (NVL Division 2 or higher) players on court at any one time, of whom a maximum of one may be male.
- In any lower divisions, a maximum of one registered National League player on court at any time (NVL division 2 or lower).
- In the junior league, if there are 2 divisions, then in junior division 1, a maximum of 2 NVL registered or of National Standard players are permitted on court at any time. NVL registered or of National Standard players are restricted to the role of helpers in Junior division 2
- In the junior league if there is only 1 division then NVL registered or of National Standard players are restricted to the role of helpers in the Junior division

National League players (NVL Division 2 or higher) must be notified by the team to the officials prior to the start of the match and recorded in the remarks section of the scoresheet. If this is not done the affected player will be deemed ineligible.

1.7 Phantom players

If a team has five players present for a match, one phantom player may be included in the line-up. The phantom player is indicated on the line-up sheet by a zero and must rotate

within the team. When a phantom is front court, the team has one fewer front court attacker. When a phantom rotates round to serve, the team immediately loses its serve and the opposition sides out. The BVA envisages that phantom players will only be used as a last resort, in order to enable matches to be attended, rather than abandoned.

When a team uses a phantom player due to the late arrival of the team's sixth player, the sixth player may not enter the game until the start of the next subsequent set. This is the same rule that applies to a seventh or more player who arrives after the start of a match.

If a team becomes incomplete during the game due to injury/illness or expulsion/disqualification (i.e. 5 players) a phantom player can be used.

If at the time the team becomes incomplete i.e. they have 5 players + libero, a phantom player can be used as a regular player and can be replaced by the libero when backcourt.

1.8 Ineligible players

A fine will be levied on a team each time an ineligible player (according to rules 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 or otherwise ineligible under the playing rules of the BVA, VE, or FIVB) participates in a match. All such matches are deemed to be lost and the League points awarded to the opposing team.

1.9 Friendly matches

Where necessary, some fixtures will include a friendly match, where two of the teams play a fixture which does not count towards League positions. Where a fixture includes a friendly match, the order of play will be altered, if necessary, to ensure the friendly fixture is the last match played in the triangular fixture.

Out of politeness, in a friendly match, any of the officials (section 3.3) from the third team must get the agreement of the two teams playing in the friendly if some or all of them want to leave early. Otherwise they must officiate fully or partly as agreed.

2 Pre-match arrangements

2.1 Match venues

The BVA Committee will endeavour to publish the fixture list for a new season as soon as possible after entries for the League have been received. The first named team on the fixture in the fixtures list is considered to be the home team. Allocation of home teams for triangular matches will be made taking account, in so far as is possible, of three factors:

- Balancing the number of home fixtures for each team.
- Maximising the use of free or low-cost venues.
- Minimising the amount of travel required.

Consequently, in order to try to obtain the best overall benefit for the League as a whole, the numbers of fixtures hosted by each team may be different.

The home team is responsible for provision of the venue and suitable match equipment. A booking of 4 hours is required for a triangular fixture.

Unless otherwise agreed with the other teams, earliest start time for a fixture shall be 9:00am and latest finish time shall be 8:30pm.

The home team is responsible for informing the BVA of match venue location and provisions including parking facilities and charges and any local knowledge that would be of benefit to travelling teams. This information will be added to the BVA website.

2.2 Playing conditions

Playing conditions at the venue provided should meet the venue requirements specified in the VE rulebook. If for any reason playing conditions fail to meet the required standard, this should be noted on the match scoresheet.

2.3 Cost of venues

The home team is responsible for paying the cost of the venue (except as provided in Rule 3.2 when a team fails to attend a fixture). No subsidy will be provided by the BVA, and away teams are **NOT** expected to pay a share of the venue. The BVA will attempt to schedule an approximately equal number of home matches for each team except where a team provides a free venue, when the BVA may schedule extra fixtures at such free venues.

2.4 Match confirmation

The BVA will publish a list of fixtures at the start of the season. This list of fixtures will be published on the BVA website and will be circulated to all nominated club representatives.

Under exceptional circumstances, fixtures may be rearranged with the prior consent of the other teams involved and the Competition Secretary. Notification of the rearrangement must be received by the Competitions Secretary at least fourteen days before the original fixture date.

If a match needs to be rescheduled, the teams involved must propose the new date, and the other teams must agree before the change is finalized. Where agreement cannot be reached

the Competition Secretary will specify a date, convenient to the teams not requesting the rearrangement, on which the match will be played.

A maximum of three changes allowed per season per team except in circumstances beyond the control of team e.g. the venue closing for repairs.

Where agreement cannot be reached the Competition Secretary will specify a date, convenient to the teams not requesting the rearrangement, on which the match will be played.

In any season, all BVA fixtures must be completed by the end of April. Where a League comprises two (or more) divisions, all fixtures must be completed by the 16th of April, allowing two weeks for the completion of the promotion/relegation playoff (see section 4.2)

Failure to notify the Competitions Secretary of a rearranged fixture will incur a fine. In the event of an agreement to rearrange a fixture, if the original request to rearrange was made by one of the visiting teams, the home team must attempt to cancel the venue booking for the match within seven days of the agreement to rearrange. If cancellation of the booking within seven days of the agreement to rearrange results in non-refundable costs for the home team, then the team requesting the rearrangement is liable in full for these costs. Evidence of the total costs incurred and the attempt to cancel the booking within seven days must be provided by the home team in this scenario.

3 Match-day arrangements

3.1 Order of matches

The order of matches to be played in triangular fixtures is:

1. The two visiting teams,
2. The home side versus the third named team,
3. The home side versus the second named team.

In the event of the venue booking running out, we would always want a match to be completed. However, if this is not possible then the result of the match will be determined on that day by the team with the highest number of points scored across the match at the point of the match ceasing.

3.1a Team sheets

Each team must submit a team sheet on VZ for the relevant match, these can be amended any time before the team sheet is submitted to the scorer. It remains the teams responsibility to ensure that only eligible players are played in the match.

The team sheet can be given to the scorer either in printed form or via a phone screen or tablet. Fully handwritten team sheets will not be accepted, however printouts with handwritten changes to shirt numbers and role (eg captain, libero) are acceptable.

The usual requirement for a team sheet applies (Shirt numbers, libero(s) (if used), team captain) should all be on it.

The scoresheet must have only players from the official VZ team sheet and must also have shirt numbers, team captain and liberos (if used). Players who do not appear on the official VZ team sheet cannot play in matches.

3.2 Late or non-arrival

Providing the court is available, fully equipped and one team is ready to commence play:

- Any team failing to appear on court, ready to play, within 15 minutes of the published start time shall forfeit the first set 25-0.
- The second set shall commence 15 minutes later, i.e. 30 minutes after the published start time. A team arriving between the start times shall be able to use the available time for warm-up. If a team is not on court ready to play 30 minutes after the published start time they shall forfeit the second set 25-0, and hence forfeit the match 2-0.

For triangular matches, the start time of the first match will be 20 minutes after the published time for the fixture (which shall be the start of the warm up for the first match). For the second and third matches of a triangular, the start time shall be 20 minutes after the finish of the preceding match, as recorded on the scoresheet.

The venue not being ready counts as late or non-arrival for the home team, so they are disadvantaged, not the visiting teams. The lateness of the venue being ready is the difference between the published start time and the actual start time as recorded on the scoresheet e.g. if the website shows 14:00 the start time of the match is 14:20, the actual match start time is 14:35, this means the venue was 15 minutes late and the home team loses the first set of the 2nd match 25-0.

If the venue is not ready 30 minutes after the published start time then the home team shall forfeit the second set of the 2nd match 25-0, and hence forfeit the match 2-0.

If the venue was 70 minutes late and the home team loses the first set of the 3rd match 25-0.

If the venue is not ready 85 minutes after the published start time then the home team shall forfeit the second set of the 3rd match 25-0, and hence forfeit the match 2-0.

If there are delay issues in the completing of the scoresheets, it will be acceptable for the Scoresheets to be completed and signed at the end of the triangular fixture.

The defaulting team will be fined and lose League points as laid out in the Schedule of Fees and Fines, and in addition will be liable for half the venue hire costs, which must be paid directly to the home team within 14 days of the defaulted fixture.

Where a team is delayed by factors wholly outside of the team's control (e.g. bad weather, accidents, illness, etc) these may be considered as extenuating circumstances. The team may appeal against sanction to the Competition Secretary by providing independent evidence of the problem (e.g. motoring organisation, police or doctor's report).

3.3 Match officials

In triangular matches, teams shall be responsible for providing officials for the match they are not playing. In any single matches the home team shall be responsible for providing suitable officials. A minimum of five officials is required to referee a match:

- First Referee
- Second Referee
- Two line-judges
- A scorer

For all divisions the First Referee must be, or have been, a qualified referee to at least VE Grade 4 or a recognised international equivalent. VE qualified referees must be registered in VZ as Referee - Local or Junior Referee - Local before officiating. Referees not registered in VZ will be considered ineligible to be First Referee.

The home team will be responsible for providing flags for line-judges.

If five officials are not present for the duration of the match, then the responsible team shall be fined and deducted League points, any occurrence of this should be noted on the score sheet and the BVA Competitions Secretary notified.

3.4 Match equipment

For the Mixed League, the net height shall be set at the standard height used for Men.

For the Junior League, the net height shall be set at the standard height used for Women.

In all Leagues, the home team is responsible for providing two match balls which must comply with the specification defined in the playing rules.

The two match balls must be of identical manufacturer, model and design (colour scheme). Each ball shall be of a condition such that all if its panels are intact (no loose stitching or unglued edges) and no panels are damaged or torn (scuff marks on the surface of a ball which comprise only discolouration of the surface of a panel or panels are not considered damage).

3.5 Team uniforms

All players in a team must wear shirts with different numbers on. Numbers may be from 1-99 and must be clearly marked on both the front and back of the shirts, in a contrasting colour to that of the shirts. Shirts must be of the same design, style and colours, with the exception of the Libero player(s) who must wear shirts of a different colour, which may be of a different design.

The first occurrence during a season of non-numbered or illegal uniforms of a player on court for a given team will result in a written warning to the team. Second and subsequent occasions will be subject to a fine and deduction of League points.

3.6 Libero

In the Mixed League each team may nominate a libero of each sex so that the correct numbers of men and women can be maintained on court. However, only one libero may be on court at any one time.

3.7 Scoring

A set (except the deciding, third set) is won by the team which first scores 25 points with a minimum lead of two points. In the case of a 24-24 tie, play is continued until a two-point lead is achieved (26-24, 27-25, ...). The match is won by the team that wins two sets. In the case of a 1-1 tie, the deciding set (the third) is played to 15 points with a minimum lead of 2 points.

3.8 Scoresheets

Scoresheets can be downloaded from the BVA Website. The home team is responsible for ensuring that scoresheets are completed for all matches, including the division, date, venue, surnames of all players and the signatures of the two team captains, two referees and scorer. Fineable offences should be noted in the Remarks section and initialled by the reporting official or team captain before the scoresheet is signed.

The officiating team should ask the captains of the two playing teams to nominate a player of the match (MVP) from the opposing team which must be entered in VZ by the refereeing team.

The scoresheet is to be uploaded to VZ and kept by the refereeing team until the next playing season.

3.9 Notification of results

On completion of a fixture, the **refereeing team** is responsible for notification of results.-The refereeing team is responsible for entering the result of the match into VZ which include:

- Set Score
- Points Scores in each set
- The MVP for both teams
- Any cards issued
- Attaching a copy of the scoresheet

Note that entry of results in VZ will automatically update the BVA website.-The refereeing team has the responsibility to update the result if there are errors.

The results are to be entered into VZ as soon as possible and in any event within two days after the match. Failure to report the results on time will result in a fine for the refereeing team.

4 End-of-season arrangements

4.1 League tables

One League point will be awarded for each set won. An additional point is awarded to the team winning the match. In the event of two or more teams being equal on points in a particular division at the end of the season, rank order will be established by considering the following criteria, in the order listed:

- Lowest number of sets lost over the whole competition.
- Highest number of points scored over the whole competition.
- Lowest number of points conceded over the whole competition.

If two or more teams are still equal a play-off shall be arranged.

4.2 Promotion and relegation

Where a League contains more than one division, the lowest placed team from a higher division will be relegated, and the highest placed team from a lower division will be promoted.

The second bottom team from the higher division, along with the second and third placed team in the lower division will play a triangular playoff match. The winner of the playoff will play in the higher division, and the other two teams will play in the lower division the following season. The eligibility of players with respect to NVL registration will be determined by the rules which apply to the higher of the two divisions involved in the playoff.

Players will not be eligible to participate in a promotion/relegation playoff if they are playing down/up from another team within their club. Only players transferred following the completion of/participation within 10 regular season sets will be eligible to play in promotion/relegation playoff.

The playoff match will be played at a time set by the Competitions secretary, and at a venue decided and booked by the BVA Competitions secretary at the beginning of the season. It will be played according to the normal rules of BVA fixtures, except that the first and second referee will be provided by the team which finished first in the lower division.

The cost of hall hire will be shared between the three teams involved in the playoff and paid to the BVA.

The order of play for the playoff match will be as follows:

1. Team from higher division versus third placed team in lower division.
2. Second placed team from lower division versus loser of match 1.
3. Second placed team from lower division versus winner of match 1.

The winner of the playoff will be decided by the first of the following criteria to provide an overall winner:

1. The team which wins two matches.
2. The team which wins most sets.
3. The team which loses the fewest sets.

4. The team which scores the most points.
5. The team which concedes the fewest points.

In the event of the above criteria not providing a clear winner, the winner will be decided by drawing lots. The BVA Committee has the right to alter this arrangement if they consider it necessary in order to maintain a balanced League structure.

4.3 Withdrawal from League

A team may withdraw from the League without penalty at the end of the season on fulfilment of all their fixtures. Withdrawal during the season, at any stage after publication of the fixtures schedule, is considered to be default of all outstanding matches and is subject to the corresponding fines and sanctions.

Teams intending to withdraw or change Leagues between seasons are requested to notify the BVA Committee as early as possible to allow adequate planning for the new season.

4.4 Attendance at BVA AGM

Each team wishing to participate in the League in the following season must have at least one representative present at the BVA AGM (which is held on the same day as the BVA Plate tournament, at the end of the season). Teams not having at least one representative present will receive a fine.

4.5 Attendance at BVA committee meetings

Clubs with more than one team in the BVA who are not otherwise represented on the BVA committee must provide a club representative at BVA committee meetings.

5 Sanctions and misconduct procedures

5.1 Fines

The decision to impose fines or loss of League points is taken by the BVA Committee, the Competition Secretary will issue written notification of any such judgements to both the offending team and the BVA Treasurer. Payment of fines must be received by the Treasurer within 28 days. If payment is not received within 28 days the value of the fine will be deducted from the team's goodwill deposit, which must then be restored to the full amount. A further late payment penalty will be deducted for every additional 14-day period that the deposit remains incomplete, until the goodwill deposit is exhausted, at which point the club in question may be barred from further participation in the Berkshire Volleyball League.

For the Current Schedule of BVA fines, please see the BVA Website.

5.2 Appeals

A club may appeal against any judgement of fines or loss of points by writing to the BVA Secretary within 14 days of the decision. A deposit to the value of the total fine outstanding is required for an appeal to be heard. If the club wins the appeal, the deposit will be returned; if the club loses the appeal, the deposit will be retained by the BVA as payment of the outstanding fine. The appeal will be considered by the BVA Committee, whose decision is final. The Committee may require a representative of the appealing team to attend and present the grounds for appeal at the first appropriate Committee meeting following receipt of the appeal.

5.3 Misconduct and disciplinary procedure

In the event of players, coaches or authorised bench personnel receiving a yellow card, red card or red and yellow card together as a result of misconduct during a match, a procedure of penalty points and suspensions will be applied as specified in the [current VE NVL Regulations](#).

5.4 Disputes

Disputes which cannot be resolved by the BVA Committee will be referred to Volleyball England whose decision and jurisdiction will be final.

Last updated: 3 Aug 2026