



National Collegiate Volleyball Federation Governance Rules

1. Preamble

In order to promote fairness and meet the season-long competitive expectations of collegiate club volleyball players and NCVF constituent organizations, the NCVF has established the following NCVF Governance Rules. These rules have evolved over years of collaboration and challenge. They reflect the current consensus of opinion among NCVF commissioners, representatives, players and other interested persons. The rules are in addition to those that may be imposed by the various NCVF recognized conferences, leagues, and divisions.

2. General Rules

- 2.1. Players and teams must, in good faith, comply with all NCVF rules by knowing and following them.
- 2.2. The NCVF Competitive Season begins on January 1 of each year and concludes with the NCVF National Championship Tournament (“NCVF Championships”).
- 2.3. As used in the NCVF rules, the term “NCVF Recognized Competitions” are defined as matches or events that are in material compliance with applicable NCVF rules, policies and Best Practices. The term “NCVF Recognized League” shall include collegiate club conferences and leagues that are in material compliance with NCVF rules, policies and Best Practices and that have been identified by the NCVF as an “NCVF Recognized League.” The NCVF retains discretion to determine material compliance with NCVF rules, policies and Best Practices..
- 2.4. Any aggrieved player or team seeking an exception to NCVF rules must follow the NCVF Appeal Process. Appeals of player or team eligibility rule applications must be forwarded to the NCVF Compliance Committee.

For appeals filed on or before February 20:	No Fee
For appeals filed after February 20 but before March 1:	\$50.00
For appeals filed on or after March 1 but before April 1:	\$100.00
For appeals filed on or after April 1:	\$150.00

Graduating Senior Exceptions and Internship Exceptions are subject to the following fees:

For appeals filed on or before February 20:	No Fee
For appeals filed after February 20 but before March 1:	\$25.00
For appeals filed on or after March 1 but before April 1:	\$50.00

For appeals filed on or after April 1:

\$100.00

Players and teams are encouraged to pursue appeals prior to participating in season competitions. Players and teams are encouraged to seek timely NCVF Rule clarifications from the NCVF Compliance Committee whenever questions arise.

- 2.5. Rule Changes shall be accomplished as set forth in this section.
 - 2.5.1. Major rule changes will be identified on the NCVF website 6 months prior to the upcoming NCVF Competitive Season unless the NCVF determines that a shorter notice period is warranted.
 - 2.5.2. Minor rule changes may be posted at any time before the start of the NCVF Competitive Season.
 - 2.5.3. Rule clarifications can be made at any time.
 - 2.5.4. The NCVF reserves discretion to change any rule at any time in order to promote the health, safety and welfare of participants or to otherwise meet its non-profit purposes. It is within the NCVF's discretion to determine what constitutes a major or minor rule change, as well as a rule clarification.
 - 2.5.5. Individuals believing that they have been materially aggrieved by any change or clarification may appeal in accord with the NCVF Appeal Process.
- 2.6. NCVF Best Practices are intended to provide "how to" guidance for those engaged in various aspects of collegiate club volleyball competition administration.
- 2.7. The NCVF reserves discretion to interpret these rules, implement policies and procedures to administer these rules, and impose reasonable sanctions for failure to comply with NCVF rules.
- 2.8. The NCVF is not bound by appeal decisions or eligibility determinations of any other institution or organization.

3. Team Eligibility Rules

- 3.1. To be an NCVF Eligible Team, a team must meet the following requirements in addition to other applicable NCVF Rules:
 - 3.1.1. All participants listed on a team roster must meet individual player eligibility rules specified in the Player Eligibility Rules section, below.
 - 3.1.2. All players listed on a team roster must be enrolled in the same 2-year or 4-year degree-granting university in order to be eligible to compete as a team. The NCVF reserves discretion to ascertain the accreditation or status of any degree granting universities for team or player eligibility purposes.

- 3.1.3.** Team rosters may only include 2 Former Varsity Players, as that term is defined in the Player Eligibility Rules section, below. Team rosters may not include any Current Year Varsity Players, as that term is defined in the Player Eligibility Rules section, below.
 - 3.1.4.** A women's team roster may not include men and a men's team roster may not include women. No women players are allowed to compete as a player on a men's team, and no men are allowed to compete as a player on a women's team.
 - 3.1.5.** Teams must be registered in good standing on the NCVF website. The NCVF reserves discretion to determine when a team is in "good standing."
 - 3.1.6.** Teams must cooperate in the timely submission of all team information, including but not limited to roster information, school information, contact information, competition results and other information reasonably requested by the NCVF.
 - 3.1.7.** Teams that are not in good standing with an NCVF Recognized League, shall be presumed to not be in good standing with the NCVF.
 - 3.1.8.** Among other requirements, "good standing" shall include a team's adherence to NCVF Code of Conduct requirements.
- 3.2.** The following rules apply to the NCVF Championships:
- 3.2.1.** Only NCVF Eligible Teams may participate in the NCVF Championships.
 - 3.2.2.** All teams seeking entry to the event must be actively participating as an NCVF recognized representative volleyball club team from their school during the NCVF Competitive Season.
 - 3.2.3.** All teams must timely submit their current season schedule of competition and results to the respective NCVF men's and women's polling and seeding chairpersons, as specified on the NCVF website, in accord with NCVF Best Practices.
 - 3.2.4.** All teams must either be a Registered NCVF Team, as defined in Section 3.3.1, below, or fulfill the guidelines of an Independent Team, as defined in Section 3.3.2, below, in order to be eligible to participate in the event.
 - 3.2.5.** The NCVF retains discretion to recognize a school's representative sport club teams for purposes of admission to the event.
 - 3.2.6.** The NCVF reserves discretion to reject any competition results from any teams that fail to meet NCVF team or player eligibility requirements or NCVF Best Practices.

- 3.3.** The following rules define NCVF Registered Teams and Independent Teams for purposes of NCVF benefits, NCVF Recognized Competitions and entry into the NCVF Championships. When used in these rules, the term NCVF Eligible Team(s) shall include both NCVF Registered Teams and Independent Teams.
- 3.3.1.** An NCVF Registered Team is an otherwise eligible team that competes in a NCVF Recognized League and has fulfilled the team registration requirements on the NCVF website.
- 3.3.2.** An Independent Team is a team that does not satisfy the definition of an NCVF Registered Team but is otherwise eligible under NCVF Team Eligibility Rules,. To be eligible to participate in the NCVF Championships, an Independent Team must show evidence of “active participation” during the current competitive season, as follows:
- 3.3.2.1.** “Active participation” for men’s teams must involve a minimum of two scheduled events after January 1st of the current NCVF season that include competition against at least four or more teams from NCVF Recognized Leagues at each of those events.
- 3.3.2.2.** “Active participation” for women’s teams must involve a minimum of two scheduled events after January 1 of the current NCVF season, involving four or more similar competitive units (teams), with at least two matches being against two different collegiate club teams (not including “B” teams, i.e. a second team from a university).
- 3.3.2.3.** Independent Team should ensure that their competition results are reported to the designated and applicable NCVF male or female seeding and poll chairpersons within 10 days following a competition or event. The NCVF reserves the right to accept or reject any reported competition results from any Independent Team for any reason.
- 3.3.2.4.** The NCVF reserves the right but is not obliged to extend NCVF benefits to Independent Teams that are otherwise available to NCVF Registered Teams.
- 3.4.** Teams not recognized by their university during the quarter/semester of the NCVF Championships, based on disciplinary reasons, shall be ineligible to participate in the NCVF Championships. At the discretion of the NCVF, this rule will not be used to prohibit a team from participating in the NCVF Championship if the institution’s primary rationale is unrelated to player, club, or team disciplinary issues.

4. Player Eligibility Rules

- 4.1.** Only NCVF Eligible Players may participate on NCVF Eligible Teams.
- 4.2. University Enrollment Criteria** – To be an NCVF Eligible Player, participants must meet the following requirements:

4.2.1. Be an enrolled student with a minimum of 3/4 full-time enrollment (generally 9 units) as an undergraduate student or minimum of six hours/units as a graduate student at an NCVF recognized 2-year or 4-year degree granting university *throughout the current NCVF Competitive Season*. For purposes of this section, NCVF Registered teams shall be presumed to be attending an NCVF recognized 2-year or 4-year degree-granting university.

4.2.1.1. Graduating Senior Exception – Graduating seniors are any undergraduate or graduate students who are graduating in March or April immediately prior to the NCVF Championship, or at the conclusions of the semester/quarter in which the NCVF Championship falls. Such students may carry any number of units required to graduate. Players who are graduating during the semester/quarter of the NCVF Championships, and are taking less than the required hours described above, must complete a *Graduating Senior Certification form* and file it with the NCVF Compliance Committee by February 16 of the year of the Championships for which they are seeking the exception.

2016 CLARIFICATION: An individual is only permitted to receive a Graduating Senior Exception one time at each academic level (Ex: A player may only receive a Graduating Senior Exception one time for their undergraduate studies, one time for their graduate studies, etc., regardless of the number of degree programs they complete at any given academic level).

4.2.1.2. Internship Exception – Students who do not meet the minimum enrollment requirements due to a school required/recommended internship must file an appeal with the NCVF Compliance Committee by February 16 of the year of the Championships for which they are seeking the exception. Students must read the *Internship Exception form* and comply with all requirements therein before filing an appeal.

4.2.2. All quarter-school participants must meet the eligibility requirements for both the winter and spring quarters.

4.2.3. Participants must be listed on the roster of a team that meets the Team Eligibility Rules.

4.2.4. The following additional participant eligibility criteria apply to all players seeking entry into the NCVF Championships:

4.2.4.1. If the NCVF Championships occur during an academic break, the preceding semester/quarter will be used to determine eligibility.

- 4.2.4.2. Players must be enrolled for the minimum number of credit hours from at least 45 days prior to the start of the NCVF Championship through the entirety of the NCVF Championship.

2014 CLARIFICATION: NCVF Governance Rules 4.3-4.6 applies to both sand court and hard court varsity volleyball programs.

4.3. Varsity Status Definitions

- 4.3.1. The following definitions will be used for purposes of identifying former, and current-year varsity players:

- 4.3.1.1. “Roster” includes those students identified by the school as members of the school’s varsity volleyball team. Roster includes but is not limited to the school’s online varsity volleyball roster, a school’s varsity volleyball squad list, or any other list maintained by the school that identifies students as members of its varsity volleyball team.
- 4.3.1.2. “Varsity” refers to a school’s varsity volleyball program including, but not limited to, a program whose team competes in and is registered with an intercollegiate sports governing body, like the NCAA, NJCAA, NAIA, CCCAA, NWAACC, etc., in the sport of volleyball. Varsity does not include club programs or club teams that are registered student organizations within a school’s intramural or recreational sports department and that do not compete in and are not registered with a national intercollegiate sports governing body in the sport of volleyball. Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules to the contrary, the NCVF reserves the right at any time to designate programs or teams as varsity for purposes of NCVF Governance Rules and to extend playing or other NCVF opportunities based on an NCVF varsity or other classification.
- 4.3.1.3. “Start of Competition” refers to the first calendar date in an academic year that the school’s varsity governing body (e.g., NCAA, NAIA, etc.) permits the school’s varsity team to engage in intercollegiate varsity competition in the sport of volleyball. “Start of Competition” is not defined as the date of a varsity team’s first competition during the current academic year.
- 4.3.1.4. “Extraordinary Circumstance” is a verifiable set of facts, that prevent an otherwise NCVF Eligible Player (as defined in Rule 4.2) from participating at any level on a Roster, as determined in the sole discretion of the NCVF. Examples of an Extraordinary Circumstance include verifiable injury, family emergency, or school-imposed restriction that are beyond the control of the student, and that prevent any participation on a Roster during the academic year in question.

- 4.3.1.5.** “Limited Participant” refers to a student on a Roster who does not participate in any capacity on a Roster beyond 7 days after the Start of Competition during the academic year in question.

NOTE: This definition may include, but does not automatically include students who are institutionally identified as “redshirt players.” “Redshirt players” may be Limited Participants under this section.

- 4.3.1.6.** A student is considered to have “left the varsity team” at the point he or she no longer represents him or herself as part of the team or participates in any varsity team activities, including, but not limited to matches, practices, conditioning sessions, strength training sessions, film watching sessions, and team meetings.

4.4. Current Year Varsity Players – Current Year Varsity Players listed on a school’s varsity roster (“Roster”) are not eligible to participate as members of an otherwise NCVF Eligible Team.

- 4.4.1.** Any student that is listed on a school’s Roster beyond seven (7) days from the Start of Competition during the current academic year shall be classified as a Current Year Varsity Player and is ineligible to compete in any NCVF Recognized Competition, including the NCVF Championships, for the entirety of the current academic year.

- 4.4.1.1.** If a student’s name is removed from the Roster within 7 days after the Start of Competition, the student will not be classified by the NCVF as Current Year Varsity Player. Provided however, that such a student may still be considered a Former Varsity Player, as defined in Rule 4.5.1.

- 4.4.1.2.** If a student’s name is removed from the Roster up to and including the 45th day following the Start of Competition, that student will be classified as a Current Year Varsity Player, but may appeal this classification under Rule 4.4.2. A student whose name remains on a Roster beyond 45 days from the Start of Competition may not appeal his or her classification as Current Year Varsity Player.

- 4.4.2.** Timely appeals from students seeking exceptions to their classifications of Current Year Varsity Players will be considered under Rules 4.4.1.1-4.4.1.2 on a case-by-case basis by the NCVF pursuant to the NCVF Appeal Process. An appeal will only be granted in cases where the student can verify that he or she:

- 4.4.2.1.** Was a Limited Participant, as defined in Rule 4.3.1.5; or

- 4.4.2.2.** Left the varsity team because of an Extraordinary Circumstance, as defined in Rule 4.3.1.4.

NOTE: Consistent with its mission and in its sole discretion, the NCVF may designate a separate division of play for Current Year Varsity Players, Former Year Varsity Players, or others who fail to meet NCVF Governance Rule requirements.

~~4.5. Former Varsity Players – A student who is a Former Varsity Player is eligible to participate on an otherwise NCVF Eligible Team so long as the student meets all NCVF Governance Rules. Provided however, NCVF Eligible Teams may only include a maximum of 2 Former Varsity Players on their NCVF Eligible Team during the current NCVF Competitive Season, including the NCVF Championships.~~

NCVF Governance Rule 4.5 – Former Varsity Players – 2023 Test Rule

The following rule shall be tested during the 2023 NCVF Regular Season and 2023 NCVF Championships. Review and further adjustments (as needed) will be completed following the completion of the NCVF Championships each season so long as the rule is being tested.

Former Varsity Players – A student who is a Former Varsity Player is eligible to participate on an otherwise NCVF Eligible Team so long as the student meets all NCVF Governance Rules. Provided however, NCVF Eligible Teams may only include a maximum of 2 Former Varsity Players **from NCAA or NAIA programs** on their NCVF Eligible Team during the current NCVF Competitive Season, including the NCVF Championships. **Players from Varsity programs other than NCAA or NAIA programs will not count toward the 2 Former Varsity Player limitation.**

4.5.1. Any student that has been listed on a school’s Roster, as that term is defined in Rule 4.3.1.1, during any academic year prior to the current academic year, shall be considered a Former Varsity Player and will be eligible to participate in all NCVF Recognized Competitions, including the NCVF Championships, so long as the student otherwise meets all other NCVF Governance Rule requirements.

4.5.1.1. If a student’s name is removed from the Roster within 7 days of the Start of Competition of the student’s first collegiate season, the student will not be considered a Former Varsity Player and will not be counted toward the team’s limit of 2 Former Varsity Players.

4.5.1.2. If a student’s name is removed from the Roster within 45 days of the Start of Competition during that student’s first collegiate season, the student will be classified as a Former Varsity Player, but may appeal this status under Rule 4.5.2. A student whose name remains on a Roster 45 days from the Start of Competition, or appears on a Roster in any year subsequent to the student’s first collegiate season, may not appeal his or her classification as Former Varsity Player.

4.5.2. Timely appeals from students seeking exceptions to their classifications of Former Varsity Players will be considered under Rules 4.5.1.1-4.5.1.2 on a case-by-case basis by the NCVF pursuant to the NCVF Appeal Process. An appeal will only be

granted in cases where the student can verify, to the satisfaction of the NCVF, that he or she:

4.5.2.1. Was a Limited Participant, as defined in Rule 4.3.1.5; or

4.5.2.2. Left the team because of an Extraordinary Circumstance, as defined in Rule 4.3.1.4.

4.6. Professional Players - A professional indoor volleyball player is not eligible to participate as a roster member of an otherwise NCVF Eligible Team.

4.6.1. The term “professional indoor volleyball player” is defined as:

4.6.1.1. Any player that has been declared a professional indoor volleyball player by a recognized professional indoor volleyball team or league and has competed as a paid participant on that team or league, or

4.6.1.2. Any player that has received a salary, wage or regular or periodic payment, directly or indirectly as consideration for playing on an indoor volleyball team that is part of an indoor volleyball league or similar organization.

4.6.2. The NCVF reserves discretion to determine when or if a player has become a professional indoor volleyball player within the meaning of this section.

2015 CLARIFICATION: The following factors, among others, will be considered in determining whether a player is a professional player: (1) Is the team a true professional team in the sense that it compensates players for travel and practices, competes at a professional level, and gives its players professional-level training? (2) Did the player appear on an official roster for the team; (3) Was that roster submitted for an official competition, tournament, or a scrimmage?

4.7. Consecutive Years

4.7.1. Four-Year Universities – NCVF Eligible Players are limited to six consecutive years of participation in NCVF Recognized Competitions, including the NCVF Championships or other previous national collegiate club volleyball championship tournaments. Year one begins the first year that an Eligible Player’s name appears on a NCVF Eligible Team roster, previous national collegiate club volleyball championship tournament team roster, or the first year their name was listed on a school’s varsity volleyball roster.

4.7.2. Two-Year Universities – NCVF Eligible Players from recognized 2-year universities are limited to three consecutive years of participation in NCVF Recognized Competitions, including the NCVF Championships or other previous national collegiate club volleyball championship tournaments. Year one begins the first year that a NCVF Eligible Player’s name appears on a NCVF Eligible Team roster, previous national collegiate club volleyball championship

tournament team roster, or the first year their name was listed on a school's varsity volleyball roster.

4.7.2.1. If a player from a recognized two-year university transfers to a four-year university, that player's eligibility will be considered under the six-year consecutive rule.

4.7.3. Exceptions to the six year and three year consecutive participation rules may be granted by the NCVF for military, medical, religious service, or other "extraordinary circumstances" pursuant to the NCVF Appeal Process.

4.7.3.1. An "extraordinary circumstance" is a narrow exception as it goes beyond what other similarly situated players may be encountering.

4.7.3.2. "Extraordinary circumstances" typically describe unfair, unreasonable, or unique factors or situations that are independently caused, i.e., with little or no student control or choice. For example, "extraordinary" includes situations where a fire, flood, or institutionally imposed decision has restricted an individual's playing opportunities.