

Updated September 2026

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CLUBS, PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS TO KNOW AND APPLY NI VOLLEYBALL COMPETITION RULES AND THE RULES OF THE GAME.

1. TITLE AND MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Volleyball Association (NI Volleyball) organises each season's League and Cup Competitions for men's and women's teams and mixed volleyball teams.
- 1.2 The NI Volleyball Competitions Commission is responsible for the organisation of the same.
- 1.3 All Competitions shall be played to these NI Volleyball rules.

2. ENTRY TO COMPETITION

- 2.1 Only clubs in good financial standing with NI Volleyball may play in NI Volleyball competitions.
 - 1. 2.1.1 All club and player affiliation and league entry fees must be paid prior to the start of the season.
 - 2. 2.1.2 All club fines and sanctions must be paid prior to the start of the season.

3 FORMAT

- 3.1 The Northern Ireland league structure shall be as directed by the Competitions Director(s). The structure will be outlined to clubs prior to the start of the season.
- 3.2 The Cup competition structures shall be as directed by the Competitions Director and will be forwarded to clubs prior to the Cup.
- 3.3 All matches must be played. Matches must be played on the agreed date, unless approved by the Competitions Director.
 - 3.3.1 The home secretary may only change the original date on the schedule once and must provide a valid reason/justification for the change of date.
 - 3.3.2 Notice of change of date must be made by completing the Fixture Change Request form and forwarding to the Competitions Director at least 3 days prior to the original and the re-scheduled date.
 - 3.3.3 Failure to adhere to the above rules when rescheduling matches will result in the request being refused.
 - 3.3.4 If matches are rescheduled without the Competitions Director being notified, a fine of £20 will be issued to the offending club.
- 3.4 All fixtures for the league will be set by the Competitions Director and forwarded to teams prior the start of the season. Each team must forward its home fixture details (dates, times and venues) to the Competitions Director (competitions@nivolleyball.com).
 - 3.4.1 Matches must not be played on national holidays.
 - 3.4.2 Matches must be played on the scheduled week (Monday - Saturday), weeknights matches the warmup time must be between 7pm and 8pm. In extreme circumstances and in agreeance between both teams a Sunday fixture can be arranged.
 - 3.4.2.1 For matches that the home team wishes to play before 7pm on a weeknight the away team secretary must agree in writing to the scheduled fixture.

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3.4.2.2 The warm up time for matches scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday must be between 10am and 7pm.

3.5 Away secretaries should make contact with the home secretary at least 3 days prior to the scheduled fixture date to confirm the match details.

3.5.1 All secretaries should keep copies of correspondence in case of a dispute.

3.6 Procedure for claiming points

3.6.1 The team secretary who wishes the appeal to be made should contact the Competitions Director as soon as possible after the problem is discovered. The Competitions Director will liaise with the club secretaries and officials involved and a decision will be made and communicated to both teams involved within two working weeks.

3.6.2 Clubs that wish to have the matters considered by NI Volleyball personnel other than the Competitions Director may do so for the following reason:

3.6.2.1 The Competitions Director is involved with one of the clubs concerned in the decision.

3.6.2.2 In this case the team secretary with the objection should inform the Competitions Director at the time of the appeal. The Competitions Director will then inform the NI Volleyball General Secretary who will appoint a neutral NI Volleyball officer to assume the role of the Competitions Director for the duration of the appeal.

3.7 All matches should be played as the best of 5 sets. 3 points will be awarded for a 3-0 or 3-1 win, 2 points for a 3-2 win, 1 point for a 2-3 loss, 0 points for 1-3 or 0-3 loss and -1 points for a forfeit.

3.8 The team winning the League will gain the title "Northern Ireland Champions" relevant to that division.

3.9 Any matches remaining at the end of the season (i.e. after the deadline for fixtures as stated by the Competitions Director) will automatically be forfeited. The decision as to who forfeits will be made by the Competitions Director based on the information provided by the clubs.

4 PLAYER REGISTRATION

4.1 All players participating in any of the official competitions must be registered. Players must be registered with the Competitions Director and affiliated to NI Volleyball through Team Fee Pay at least 1 days before the player participates in a match. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a loss for the offending team

4.2 All player registrations must be completed by email to the Competitions Director.

4.3 A player may only be registered with one NI Volleyball affiliated club for NI Volleyball league competitions at any time. If player is registered for two different teams the earliest registration will be accepted.

4.4 Once a player plays for a team in a division he/she is registered for that team for that division.

4.5 Players registered for a team in the NI Volleyball National league division may NO longer play for a team in the NI Volleyball 1st division. The exception to this is where a club has more than 1 team playing in the league. In this case players from the "A" team can continue

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to play on court for the “B” team for 2 matches only irrelevant of the number of points played (including libero).

4.6 Where club has more than one team players from teams “B” and “C” can play up for maximum of 5 sets per season (from start to finish). When 5 sets are reached the player will be moved/registered to team “A”.

4.6.1 Where a player is on the court if they come with the team score past 13 points it will only be deemed as half a set. Alternatively, if they come off the court before 12 points in a set the same rule will be applied.

4.6.2 Where a club has 3 teams, once a player from Team B has played a set for Team A, he/she can no longer play for Team C

4.7 The transfer of a player from one club to another must result in the Competitions Director being informed in writing at least seven (7) days prior to the transfer of the player. In season, player transfers may only occur during the transfer window of 19/12/2026 – 31/01/2027 inclusive.

4.7.1 All players not previously registered with a club have until 28/02/2027 to complete a registration

4.8 For the Cup/Plate competition event players from team A cannot play down to team B, players from team B cannot play down to team C.

5 FIXTURES PROCEDURE

5.1 It is the home team's responsibility to inform the visiting team and referees of the venue and court/starting times of each match (see Rule 6.3).

6 MATCH PROCEDURE

6.1 The home team is responsible for providing match equipment – net at accurate height, correct lighting, antennas, posts, referee stand, score board, score sheet, rotation slips.

6.2 It is the referee's responsibility to ensure the warm-up and match start times (time of first serve) are adhered to. The match must start no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of court time e.g. Court time starts at 8.00pm then match start time is no later than 8.30pm.

6.3 Where both teams are ready to play at the scheduled starting time, but the hall booking expires before the match is finished, the match will be awarded to the visiting team, unless 2.5 hours have elapsed (including the warm up time), in which case the match will be continued at different time.

6.4 Where a team is not ready to play at the time of first serve, a forfeit of 1 set (25-0) shall be applied and a further forfeit of 1 set per each 15 min period thereafter. If the hall booking expires the match will be awarded to the team which was ready to start on time. All reasonable means should be made to extend a booking where the match has not been completed.

6.5 It is the responsibility of the match officials to maintain a safe competition area i.e.

6.5.1 No unauthorised personnel should be within the competitions area see Rule 19.

6.5.2 All players' / coaches' equipment (bags, balls, bottles etc.) should be behind the team benches.

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6.6 NI Volleyball score sheet must be used. Both referees must sign it when it has been completed by all other relevant parties. The winning team must notify the score of the match (sets and set points) and send/email/text picture of the score sheet to NI Volleyball Competitions within 2 hours of the completion of the match.

6.7 MVPs should be noted on the scoresheet before signing – the opposite team must nominate MVP players from the players that have played in the match.

6.8 All appeals, properly recorded on the score sheet as arising from the match, must be sent in writing to the Competitions Director within 2 weeks of the match.

7 MATCH OFFICIALS

7.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to organise the match officials.

7.1.1 Only when the Competitions Director decides or for final stages of competitions, will NI Volleyball appoint officials.

7.1.2 The home team must organise 1st and 2nd Referee two referees and scorer. All Officials should hold and display the appropriate NI Volleyball qualifications.

7.1.3 The home team accepts responsibility for paying the officials.

7.1.4 Failure to have the appropriate officials will result in fines and loss of points.

8 TROPHIES

8.1 Trophies will be awarded to the winners of each competition.

8.2 The trophies must be engraved and kept until requested by NI Volleyball the following year. 8.3 A club will be responsible for the damage or loss of any trophy.

8.4 Disciplinary action will be taken for non-repair or non-replacement of damaged or lost trophies.

9 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

9.1 The Competitions Director can impose a fine of £50 for any breach of the foregoing rules.

9.1.1 Any player receiving 2 red cards in a season shall be suspended for 2 matches.

9.1.2 Any player being disqualified for a match will be suspended for 2 matches.

9.2 All suspensions will be carried over to the following season where insufficient matches are available for the suspension to be carried out in the present season.

9.3 The suspension of a player is immediate, but shall be held in waiting pending an appeal. The Competitions Director must be informed in writing of the player's grounds for appeal, within 2 weeks of the suspension taking effect. The player involved will be informed within 2 weeks of receipt of an appeal of the date of any appeal hearing.

9.4 Any further appeals must be addressed to NI Volleyball Secretary. Their decision is final.

10 FEES

10.1 All league registration fees are to be paid at least 1 day before the start of the league. If the fees have not been paid then any games played will be forfeited by the offending team(s).

10.2 New teams entering the league for the first time (at least 3 years absence) receive a 50% reduction in their team entry.

11. PENALTIES

11.1 Failure to complete required forms as requested by NI Volleyball before the deadline set. ie. League fixtures - £20 (paid by the offending team)

11.2 Incomplete/Incorrect score sheet - £10 (paid by home team)

11.3 Non-return of score sheet within 2 weeks - £20 (winning team)

11.4 Playing unregistered player – £20 per player and forfeiture of game

11.5 Playing illegal player - £20 per player and forfeiture of game. Point still awarded for playing the fixture

11.6 Non-fulfilment of fixture - £20 fine and forfeiture of game by offending team. £10 to be paid to aggrieved team and £10 to NI Volleyball

11.7 If a Team refuses to play after being summoned by the referee to do so, it is declared in default and forfeits the match with the result 0-3 (25:0, 25:0, 25:0) for the match

12. PROTESTS

12.1 All protests involving matches postponed and abandoned should be sent to the competitions commission at competitions@nivolleyball.com, by the Secretary of the club making the protest within seven (7) days of the scheduled fixture date, accompanied by a fee of £100.

12.2 The Commission may gather information from the clubs involved, umpires or third parties.

12.3 The Commission decision will be communicated to the relevant parties involved.

12.4 The fee will be refunded in a proven case.

12.5 Protests will only be considered if submitted in accordance with Rule 12.1. Under no circumstances will protests be considered if submitted through any other means.

12.6 All appeals should be submitted in writing to the Secretary of NI Volleyball within a 7-day period after Commission's decision.

12.7 The Secretary of NI Volleyball will respond with a final decision within 2 weeks by following the NI Volleyball appeal procedure. This period can be extended if necessary.

13. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Depending on the complaint or misconduct disciplinary sanction will be applied. NI Volleyball reserve the right to act against any club or member where it is deemed necessary, without an official complaint.

- Fine
- Warning, Formal Warning, Final Warning
- Matches ban
- Expulsion from all NI Volleyball-related activities

14. Clean Sport

NI Volleyball believes in clean competition climbing and works in partnership with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) to ensure that the integrity of our sport is protected.

The use of performance-enhancing drugs and other doping behaviour severely damages the legitimacy of sport and undermines the integrity of clean athletes.

Anti-Doping Rules

The anti-doping rules for NI Volleyball are consistent with the World Anti-Doping Code, which governs anti-doping internationally. The anti-doping rules of NI Volleyball are the UK Anti-Doping Rules, published by UK Anti-Doping, and amended from time to time:

UKAD Anti-Doping Rules

All members shall be deemed to have made themselves familiar with and agreed to be bound by Anti-Doping Rules of NI Volleyball and to submit to the authority of UK Anti-Doping in the application and enforcement of those Anti-Doping Rules.

The Anti-Doping Rules of NI Volleyball apply to all members participating in Volleyball for a minimum of 12 months from the commencement of membership, in accordance with the NI Volleyball's regulation, whether or not the member is a citizen of, or resident in, the UK.

14. OFFICIAL RATIFICATION OF MATCHES

14.1 All matches should be played as the best of 5 sets.

14.2 Points awarded per match to each team:

Winner 3:0 or 3:1 3 points

Winner 3:2 2 points

Loser 2:3 1 point

Loser 1:3 or 0:3 0 points

Forfeit -1 point

14.3 Any matches remaining at the end of the season (i.e. after the deadline for fixtures as stated by the Competitions Commission) will automatically be forfeited by the home team.

14.4 The team ranking is determined by the number of points gained.

14.4.1 In case of equality in the number of points gained by two or several teams, they will be classified they will be classified by the set quotient resulting from the division of the number of all sets won by the number of all sets lost.

14.4.2 If the tie persists, as per the set quotient, they will be classified in descending order by the set points quotient resulting from the division of all set points scored by the total of set points lost during all sets.

4.4.3 If the tie continues, as per the sets points quotient, the teams are ranked according to the result(s) of the match(es), which the teams have disputed between them.

For all other rules on playing conditions and game regulations all FIVB rules apply.