

Beach volleyball rules and gameplay



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If you're familiar with standard indoor volleyball, then you should have no trouble picking up beach volleyball.

There are a few minor differences between the two, though. Beyond the playing surface, the most notable difference is the team size, which consists of two rather than six players. Other than that, there are many minor differences, including:

- A block counts as one of the three touches each team is allowed before sending the ball back over the net.
- The court is a little smaller—measuring 8 by 16 meters instead of 9 by 18.

- The point system is different. Teams play the best of three sets, which consist of 21 points.
- A player may cross under the net as long as he or she doesn't interfere with opposing players.
- Players alternate serving, and they do not rotate.
- The ball is softer and slightly bigger than the ball used in indoor volleyball.
- Referees are stricter about overhand finger passes.

Such a pass may only be made if you are standing with the shoulders square to the net.

- Double contact faults are more strictly enforced. As in standard volleyball, there are different strategies that players use to defend against a serve. It's common for beach volleyball teammates to coordinate their strategy with one another using finger signals, commonly known as block signals.

Prior to the serve, the receiving players typically line up in a deceptive position, with the player in front sending the block signal behind his or her back so the opposing team can't see. Then, once the ball is in the air, they move into the position that has been signaled. One way to defend against the serve is to assign sides for each player—with one defending the left side

and the other the right. More commonly, one player takes the net while the other defends the back of the court.

As in indoor volleyball, teams are allowed only a certain number of touches, and a point is scored when the ball hits the ground or goes out of bounds. All in all, although many people assume that beach volleyball is a more laid back version of the indoor variety, it's actually a highly rule-bound sport that is even stricter in some ways. Players do tend to wear uniforms that are derivative of casual swimwear, but this says more about the traditions of the sport than the gameplay itself.