Volleyball terms cheat sheet

The 40 words new players hear most, grouped by what is happening on the court. By Ryan Walker, PlayingVolley.com

Serve and pass

Serve: first contact of every rally, from behind the end line after the whistle (8 seconds; 5 in US high school).

Ace: a serve that scores directly.

Float: a serve with no spin that wobbles and drops.

Let serve: clips the net and crosses: still in play.

Foot fault: server touching the end line or court before contact.

Bump: forearm pass off a flat platform.

Serve receive: passing the other team's serve.

Pass scale: 3 = setter has every option, 2 = still a quick or one pin, 1 = high ball only, 0 = error or aced.

Dime / shank: a perfect pass / a pass that flies off target.

Free ball: an easy ball sent over with no attack. Call "free!"

Set

Set: the second contact for a hitter. Also a game: to 25, deciding set to 15, win by 2.

Setter: takes the second contact and runs the offense.

Tempo: 1st: hitter in the air as the setter touches it. 2nd: approach starts at the set. 3rd: high ball.

Dump: the setter attacking on the second contact.

In / out of system: full offense available / setter chasing, high ball outside.

Attack and block

Attack (spike): any attempt to send the ball over to score.

Kill: an attack that scores.

Line / cross-court: down the sideline / diagonally across.

Tip / roll shot: soft touch over the block / slow topspin attack into a gap.

Tool: hit off the blocker's hands so it lands out: a kill.

Pipe / bic: back-row attacks from zone 6; the bic is the quicker, lower set.

Block: front-row players reaching above the net. A block touch is not one of the three contacts.

Roof (stuff): a block straight down for a point.

Soft block: slows the ball up to your own defense.

Defense

Dig: keeping an attacked ball off the floor.

Pancake: flat hand on the floor, ball bounces off the back of it.

Joust: two players contact the ball above the net at the same moment; play on.

Hitter coverage: teammates crouched around the hitter for balls off the block.

Rules, faults and scoring

Rally scoring: a point on every rally.

Side-out: winning the rally on their serve; you rotate and serve.

Rotation: one spot clockwise when you win the serve back. Zone 1 serves.

Overlap: players out of position at the serve: a fault.

Double contact / lift: two touches in a row / ball comes to rest in the hands.

Four hits: four team contacts before sending it over.

Net fault: touching the net between the antennas while playing the ball.

Back-row attack: back-row player attacking above the net from in front of the 3 m line: a fault.

Libero: back-row specialist in a different jersey; no blocking, no attacking above the net.

Hitting %: (kills - errors) / attempts.

Referee signals and gym slang

What the whistle means, and what your teammates are yelling.

Referee hand signals (FIVB)

Team to serve: arm extended toward the team that serves next.

Ball in: arm and fingers pointed at the floor.

Ball out: forearms raised, hands open, palms toward the body.

Double contact: two fingers raised, spread.

Four hits: four fingers raised, spread.

Catch (lift): forearm lifted slowly, palm up.

Overlap / rotation fault: circular motion with the forefinger.

Net touched: points to the side of the net.

Reaching over the net: hand held above the net, palm down.

Attack hit fault: downward motion with the forearm, hand open (back row, libero).

Centre line or foot fault: points to the line.

Blocking fault or screen: both arms up, palms forward.

Delay in service: eight fingers raised.

Ball touched: brushes the fingers of one upright hand with the other palm.

Double fault, replay: both thumbs up.

Time-out / substitution: hands form a T / forearms circle each other.

End of set: forearms crossed in front of the chest.

Cards: yellow = warning, red = point to the other team, red + yellow = expulsion or disqualification.

Gym slang

Campfire: a ball drops while everyone watches it.

Husband and wife: two players let it drop between them.

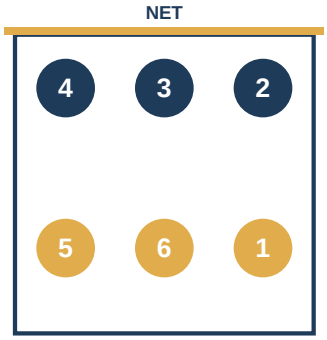
Six-pack: a defender takes a spike to the face.

Chicken wing: one-arm save with the elbow bent out.

Kong: a one-armed block.

Mine / help / out: claim the ball / ask for the next touch / let it go.

Court zones



Front row: 4, 3, 2.
Back row: 5, 6, 1.
Zone 1 serves.
Rotate clockwise:
2 to 1, 1 to 6, 6 to 5,
5 to 4, 4 to 3, 3 to 2.

Beach blocker signals (behind the back)

One finger: block the line.

Two fingers: block the angle.

Closed fist: no block, pulling off the net.

Open hand: block the ball.