



CMSA Open Indoor Volleyball Rules and Regulations

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Section I - MEMBERSHIP

- a) All players must be a current CMSA Open Indoor Volleyball member. Team captains are responsible for verifying that all players on their roster are current CMSA Open Indoor Volleyball members. If any team allows a non-CMSA Open Indoor Volleyball member to play, the entire team **may** be subject to being expelled from the League. For legal liability reasons this point is not negotiable; no exceptions will be made. At any time when a team is playing or refereeing (or about to play or referee or just completed playing or refereeing), the League or the up-referee may check the registration status of any player on the team.
- b) Generally any question as to a player's CMSA status should be resolved before the player is allowed to play. Team captains may direct an email to the current Open Volleyball League Commissioner at: openvb@chicagomsa.org, and the Commissioner will check the status of any players in question. In case of a dispute, the player must provide proof of current CMSA status (i.e. e-mail confirmation of payment). If in doubt, players are advised to fill out and sign another CMSA form and pay any unproven fees. If or when any double payment is discovered, players will be reimbursed.

If a person insists that he/she/they is registered, the up-referee may allow that person to play, but should report the person's name to the Commissioner. If it is later determined that the person was not registered, all games in which the person played shall be charged as a loss to the team that used the player.
- c) All CMSA membership fees, and individual fees are due no later than the date posted on registration. This rule is strictly enforced. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Section II – KICKOFF MEETING

The League Commissioner will hold a meeting before the start of the season. It is encouraged that each team send at least 1 or 2 representatives (preferably the captain and scorekeeper). The Commissioner will send out the information for the date, place, and time. Each team is responsible for knowledge of ALL rules throughout the season.

Section III – SCHEDULING and ROSTERS

CMSA Open Indoor Volleyball plays on Sundays, starting in mid-autumn and going into early spring. Play does not occur on near certain holidays and on days when facilities are not available. You can check out the CMSA Volleyball website (<https://chicagomsa.org/sports/volleyball/>) for more information.

- a) A team must have eight registered players before it will be placed on the schedule.
- b) When a team registers it will be asked to select a division of play. Generally, the League will honor a team's designation in which the team will play. The League reserves the right to place a team in a different division than the one designated by the team if the League determines that the team is likely to play significantly above or below the division it designated. The League may also merge divisions to avoid a division of eight (8) or fewer teams.
- c) All rosters are considered final after the fourth week into the regular season. However, a team may add a player at any point in the season if it informs the Commissioner that it needs a new player so that it can regularly field a team of six players. Any new player must register and pay the player fee (and any applicable CMSA memberships). Teams may be issued forfeits for games that any non-registered players have played, as well as being subject to expulsion.
- d) The League reserves the right to require players to sign in when playing, either with a League Board Member, or on a sign-in sheet located with the scoresheets.
- e) If your team realizes that the division selected is not a good fit, there will be an opportunity, early in the season, for a team to change divisions. Additionally, the League reserves the right to move any team to a higher division where it appears that the team is playing significantly above the level of play in its original division. With the exception for Playoffs, the League will not move a team to a lower division without that team's consent.

- f) If a team, that is otherwise in the appropriate division, has a player that plays at a level significantly above the division, the League may for safety reasons require that the player transfer to a team in a division appropriate to the player's level of skill. The league will assist in transferring such a player.
- g) For the Playoffs, the League reserves the right to move a team to a lower division if:
 - The team is among the lowest three teams in its division at the end of the regular season; or
 - Doing so will balance the size of the divisions for purposes of the playoff brackets.
- h) When a team changes divisions the following will happen in relation to the scores of the games already played:
 - A team that changes divisions starts with a new win-loss record in the new division;
 - Teams that had already played a team that changes divisions will not have wins or losses against that team removed from the standings.
- i) During the regular season, the League may schedule games between teams of different divisions. Those games, may, at the discretion of the Commissioner, be included in the standings. For purposes of seedings for the Playoffs and trophies, the League may exclude from a team's record losses to higher level teams (in particular, this may be done where not all teams in a division played the same number of interdivisional games).

Section IV - DRESS CODE

The following dress code exists for the safety of all players. In the event a player suffers an injury caused by an opposing player's failure to observe the dress code, his/her/their team will may be issued a forfeit for that day's scheduled games. The dress code is as follows:

- a) Shirts
 - a. All Players **MUST** wear a shirt with a unique number so the officiating team may track the position of the players.
 - b. Liberos must wear a different color shirt.
 - c. The opposing team may gain 1 point per player who does not comply with the requirements.
 - d. Some teams may elect not to enforce the numbered shirt rules.
 - i. To adjust rules:
 - 1. C and CC: 2 of 3 captains of the "pod" must agree
 - 2. B and BB: 3 of 3 captains of the "pod" must agree
 - ii. If there is no agreement, then the official rules are enforced
- b) RUBBER BOTTOM SHOES MUST BE WORN
- c) **NO** loose or protruding jewelry may be worn during play. This includes, but not limited to: watches, hoop earrings, necklaces, rings (band rings are ok) etc.
- d) Sweatbands, hats, and bandannas may be worn so long as they do not interfere with play (such as continuously falling off, or interfering with another player on your team).
- e) A player who violates the Dress Code rules and causes injury to another player or damage to equipment may be held responsible for any losses caused thereby.

Section V – ROSTER SUBSTITUTIONS

Any team may "borrow" a player to play games as long as these rules are followed:

- The subbing player is a registered CMSA Open Volleyball member for current season
- The subbing player was requested and verified to be eligible more than 24 hours before games
 - a. A captain can arrange for their own sub, and get that sub verified
 - b. A captain can request a Sub, and the Commissioner will assign a sub. The requesting captain does not have the ability to select the sub from a list.
- The subbing player is in the same or lower division than the team borrowing the player.
- The adding of the subbing player will allow the team to match but not exceed the number of players on the opposing team.

- a. *For example, if a team has only four regular players and its opponent has six, the team can use two subs. But if the opposing team has only five players, then only one sub may be used. If both teams have only four players, they can both use either one or two subs. If one of the teams uses only one sub, then the other team may use only one sub;*
- A team does not already have more than two subs on the court at any time.
- If an emergency sub is necessary less than 24 hours before game play
 - a. Sub(s) must still be requested and approved
 - b. Opposing team will be awarded 2 points per emergency sub

A team that suspects that another team has used a Roster Substitution that does not meet the above criteria may complain to the Commissioner by email. If the Commissioner determines that the subbing player did not meet the criteria, the offending team shall be charged with game forfeits, and subject to rules regarding non-registered players.

Section VI - PLAY

- a) ALL GAMES WILL BE RALLY SCORING (it does not need to be your serve to get a point).
- b) Play shall be governed by the rules of the North American Gay Volleyball Association (NAGVA) (<https://nagva.org/documents>) and any rules adopted by such rules (NAGVA adopts from the United States Volleyball Association (USAV) rules (<https://usavolleyball.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-2025-USAV-Indoor-Rules-Book.pdf>)). The Commissioner may allow, for a specified division of play, variations from those rules provided that notice of any variation shall be sent to all captains of teams playing in that division.
Current Rule Exceptions:
 - The rule adopted regarding under the net violations (NAGVA allows body parts higher than the foot to cross under the net and touch the floor so long as it does not interfere with play) will not be in effect.
 - A net fault shall occur only when a player, when playing the ball, contacts the vinyl strip at the top of the net or contacts any other part of the net in a manner that interferes with play.
- d) All divisions and all teams may use a Libero. However, it is highly recommended that the lower divisions do not use the Libero. The Libero must have a different colored shirt than the rest of the team.
- e) To begin a game, a team must have at least four (4) players. Once a game begins you may not add additional players that are not listed on the line up submitted at the start of the game to the officiating team. If a player is listed on the line up but is not on the court at the time of that player's service turn, the team will forgo the serve and the opposing team will gain a point and possession to serve. (See Ghost Rule below)
- f) If a team cannot court at least four (4) players after five (5) minutes of the start time of a scheduled match, the team will forfeit that first game. If the team is still unable to court at least four (4) players after an additional ten (10) minutes (15 minutes after the start time of a scheduled match), then the second game will be forfeited as well. *For example: Your scheduled start time is at 10:00. You have 3 players on time and ready to play. At 10:05, the 1st game is forfeited, if still fewer than 4 players. At 10:15 the 2nd game will be forfeited if still fewer than 4 players.*
- j) If there is a forfeit before a scheduled match and all teams involved agree to start the match early, this may be done. However, forfeits are not given until their scheduled start time and the proper time has elapsed as stated above.
- h) There will be a time limit of 45 minutes for each match. Due to the number of teams, the warm up is included in the 45 minutes. It is imperative that the captains have their line-ups ready to go as soon as the game ahead of them is finished.
- i) If there is a tie as time runs out, the teams will continue to play until a team is ahead. THERE ARE NO TIES.
- j) There is NO Ghost Rule in effect for the regular season or Playoffs games. The Ghost Rule is: If a team is playing with only 4 or 5 players on the line up sheet, the "ghost" (non-existing player(s)) will start off the match in position five and/or six. When the "ghost" rotates into position one to serve, the team forfeits

their serve, a point is awarded to the opposing team and the other team takes possession of the ball to serve. Reminder that this DOES take effect if the “ghost” player IS listed on the line up sheet.

Specifics - Regular Season

- a) Each match will consist of two (2) games to **25** points starting at zero. (Win by 2, Cap at 27)

Specifics - Playoffs

The format of the Playoffs shall be announced by the Commissioner in advance of the Playoffs and may reflect the availability of court space and the size of playoff divisions. The composition of each division may be changed, from the regular season, as necessary to make maximum use of the available court space and to address team talent and skill imbalances within a division that become apparent over the course of the season.

Section VII - OFFICIATING AND SCOREKEEPING

- a) All teams registered will be scheduled to referee various games throughout the season. A team must provide at least four (4) players in order to officiate. You need at least a 1st official (“Up Ref”), score keeper and two (2) lines judges. If you have more people, you should next have a 2nd official (“Down-Ref”), and then can have someone help with scorekeeping or lines. Please attend the Kickoff Meeting to learn more about the roles of the officiating team.
- b) It is the officiating team’s responsibility to be paying attention to the game being played and to have the knowledge of the rules to enforce.
- c) It is the responsibility of the officiating team to quickly hold the “coin toss” and begin the match at the schedule time.
- d) It is the officiating team’s responsibility to keep the matches on time. A five (5) minute and two (2) minute warning should be announced before the end of the game’s scheduled time (usually done by the scorekeeper or “Down-Ref”). No time outs are allowed after the two (2) minute warning. ([See Appendix on Timekeeping](#))
- e) It is the officiating team’s responsibility to keep score. Scoring instructions will also be provided at the Kickoff Meeting.
- f) After each match, the completed score sheet should be signed by the scorekeeper and each of the team’s captains and left at the score table.
- g) For any issues that arise that are outside of the officiating team’s knowledge, it is the 1st Official’s (Up-Ref’s) responsibility to find the League Commissioner and/or League Board Member. If the issue cannot be decided, a re-do should be done.

Specific Location Rules – All Gyms

- The ball is dead when it hits the ceiling or basketball gear **unless** it falls back on the side that hit the ball, in which case that side can continue playing the ball if that team has any hits left.
- If the ball hits an obstacle hanging from the ceiling, such as a chain, play ends and a “do over” shall be called.
- No player may enter another court if, at the time, games are being played on the court. Otherwise, the ball is considered out of bounds.
- If the space between the wall and the back court line is less than three feet, or if there is some obstruction in that space, when serving a player may place, or land with, one foot inside the court.
- If the courts are separated by a curtain: (i) the ball is dead when it contacts the curtain; and (ii) If any player makes contact with the curtain during play, other than insignificant brushing against the curtain, it is a fault and the ball should be whistled dead and a point awarded to the other team.

Section X – AWARDS

Awards will be available for the first three teams in each division for both the regular season and the Playoffs. After the Playoffs, the Commissioner will notify captains of each team that is eligible for an award to see if the team wishes to receive a tangible award (such as a trophy or medals). No awards will be given to teams that do not request one. A team that is eligible for an award for both the regular season and playoff will receive only one tangible award, if requested.

Section XI - INJURIES/ACCIDENTS

- a) If a participant is injured on or off the court during one of the CMSA events and is in need of medical attention, it is the captain's responsibility to make sure that someone assists with the injured person to seek medical attention. A first aid kit is available at each facility.
- b) If an injury occurs, please notify the League Commissioner as soon as possible after the injury and provide the details so an incident form can be completed for insurance purposes.
- c) If the injured player cannot or does not want to continue for that game, in the interest of play, the game will continue as follows:
 - If the team has another player to bring into the game, the team may make an exceptional substitution for the injured player;
 - If the team only had 5 or 6 players to start and now only has 4 or 5 players, the team may still play the match with the remaining players. The injured player is treated as if they were never in the lineup and the scorekeeper skips over that player when determining the next server on the scoresheet. No additional points shall be deducted or awarded as a result of the injured player leaving the game;
 - If a team only had 4 players to start and now only has 3, the team has the option of continuing to play with 3 people or the team may forfeit the game at that point. The team forfeiting keeps whatever score it has at the time of the forfeit and the scorekeeper records 25 points for the winning team and writes "FORFEIT DUE TO INJURY" in the remarks section of the scoresheet;
 - Once the injured player has left the game, they may not re-enter that game.
- d) Keep in mind that the facilities we use are multi-purpose venues, and we are not the only Leagues that use them. Unfortunately, there is not a cleaning crew that cleans before we play on Sundays. There are brooms and mops throughout the Armory and in the storage room accessible in the northwest corner of the gym in the Center on Halsted. Anyone may take the time to sweep their court before the match, however, this will not stop the clock on the allowed 45 minutes per match.
- c) In order to lessen the risk of injury, we ask that all participants become aware of their surroundings before stepping onto the court. Please notify a court manager or the League Commissioner if you encounter any of the following possible hazards on the court:
 - Any foreign substance on the floor that will cause a person to fall. For example, spilled beverages or moisture that has leaked from the roof, etc;
 - Basketball goals, wrestling mats, or other objects that are used in the gymnasium prior to Sundays.

NOTE: Chairs, tables, bleachers & benches should be at a safe distance of at least 15 feet from the boundary lines of any court, when possible.

Section XII - SPORTSMANSHIP UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a) CMSA will not tolerate anyone who condone or participate in unsportsmanlike conduct or play. The following guidelines are to help deter any action that might be considered unsportsmanlike. The officials, court managers, directors and any other CMSA board member will be directed to watch closely for anything resembling unsportsmanlike conduct. Specific conduct considered unsportsmanlike includes but is not limited to:
 - A player who taunts his/her/their opponent after or during play;
 - A person who swears at or is overly aggressive toward an official, opponent, teammate, or League administrator;

- A player who physically attacks or assaults an official, opponent, teammate, or any CMSA member or spectator will be immediately ejected from the League for the remainder of the season and continue to be on probation until the volleyball committee can review the case as to whether or not that person is allowed to play in the League again.
- b) All unsportsmanlike conduct will be subjected to the League Board on a case-by-case basis as deemed appropriate.
- c) Members of the League Board will be in attendance at various matches throughout the season and will be watching for unsportsmanlike conduct. The League Commissioner, League Board Members or any CMSA Board Member (when not the aggressor of the conflict) will have the authority to automatically eject any individual who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes but is not limited to conduct after a volleyball match is over.
- d) Players are not allowed to consume alcohol or drugs immediately before or during a game in which they are participating. Players who are obviously impaired may be removed by the officiating team, League Commissioner, League Board Member, or CMSA Board Member.

Section XIII – EXPULSION

- a) If a team is disbanded from the League because of the conduct of one or several players from that team, the remaining players in good standing can decide to try to continue playing on another team. A lottery will be done for all eligible players beginning with the lowest seeded team at that time for the division in which the expelled team was in. Starting with the lowest seeded team and continuing up from there; the team may choose any player from the expelled roster to be added to their roster.
- b) If a member is expelled from the League, that member will NOT be refunded any Membership fees.

Section XIV – COMMISSIONER AND BOARD

- a) The League Commissioner shall be appointed for each season by the CMSA Board. In the absence of an appointment, the Commissioner for the season year may continue on as the Commissioner for the next season.
- b) The League Commissioner may form a Board (League Board) that assists both in running the games and in making policy decisions and resolving disputes that arise during the season. During play, any Board Member speaks for the League and may give such directions, such as cutting games short or disqualifying a player, as the Board Member deems necessary to facilitate the fair and timely completion of games and the enforcement of these rules.
- c) Except as provided in the Bylaws of CMSA or as directed by the board of CMSA, the Commissioner is the final authority on the interpretation and application of these rules and rules that govern play and on the imposition of any sanction for the violation of these rules. The Commissioner may in any particular case for good reason excuse compliance with any of these rules.

Section XV – COMMUNICATION

- a) The League speaks through the Commissioner or any League Board Member. Any notices or messages from the Commissioner to a team captain will be sent to the email address used by the captain when registering. Any messages to the Commissioner shall be sent to openvb@cmsa.org.
- b) Any complaint about the conduct of another player or another team, or a call made by a referee, shall be sent by email to the Commissioner.
- c) In the case of a sportsmanship complaint, the Commissioner may refer the complaint to the CMSA Board who may then handle the complaint as it sees fit.
- d) In the case of a complaint over a refereeing call, the Commissioner may refer the complaint to the full League Board. The decision of the Commissioner, or Board, as the case may be, will be final. Generally, the score or outcome of a game will not be changed as the result of a refereeing mistake.

Section XVI – CMSA RULES

In addition to these Open Indoor Volleyball Rules and Regulations, all players and teams are subject to the rules of CMSA. In the event of a conflict between the rules of CMSA and these, the rules of CMSA shall govern.

Section XVII – AMENDMENTS

The board of the League may amend these Rules and Regulations at any time, provided that no amendment shall prejudice a team or player as to a game already played or event that has already occurred. If an amendment will alter the manner in which games are played over the remainder of a season, notice of the amendment must first be given to all captains.

APPENDICES...

Time Keeping Rules

1. Note on the scoresheet the time when the Up Ref starts the first game. Also note 45 minutes later from that time.
2. Time runs, without any stopping, for 45 minutes. It continues to run in between games and during time outs.
3. When there are five minutes left – at the 40-minute mark – the scorekeeper should shout to the Up Ref that there is five minutes left.
4. When there are two minutes left – at the 43-minute mark – the scorekeeper should shout to the Up Ref that there are two minutes left. No time outs are allowed in the last two minutes.
5. When time runs out, the scorekeeper should shout to the Up Ref that time is up.
6. Once time is up, the game and set ends. If the ball is in play when “time’s up,” that play continues until the point is scored. If the score results in a tie, one more point will be played and the winner of that point wins the game.

Change History

Updated Date	Acting Commissioner	Notes
10/29/2024	Ed Hayes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added emergency subs
10/21/2024	Ed Hayes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subs can be same level for all levels
10/12/2024	Ed Hayes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated logos• Updated Section IV (shirt rules)• Updated Section V (added 24 hour verification)• Updated Section VII (clarified curtain section)
4/1/2024	Bill Barrett	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated Sections, I, III, IV, V, VI, XII, XIV• Combined Specific Location Rules (Section VII)• Added tie breaker in Time Keeping Rules
3/10/2024	Bill Barrett	Rules and Regulations were cleaned-up and modified in a few respects.
9/26/2023	Bill Barrett	2015 Rules and Regulations were updated and combined with other docs
2015		Prior to History Tracking