Have a child starting volleyball?

Trying a new sport for the first time can be intimidating, but there’s a reason volleyball has exploded in popularity across the world. It is a dynamic, fun game that can be played in the backyard, in the pool, on the beach or in the gym. All you need is a net and a ball, and you are ready to play.

Before your child gets started, it might help to understand a few of the game’s rules and what equipment is needed to play. This guide breaks volleyball down so new players and their parents can be prepared to dig in.
W O R D S  O F  A D V I C E
Parents and coaches shared what they wish they had known about volleyball before getting started.

It’s all about the team.
Volleyball is one of the most team-oriented sports out there. One player can’t win the match on their own, so learning to put faith into your teammates and giving the best effort possible will ensure the most success.

Focus on the fundamentals.
Volleyball takes time to learn, so breaking down the fundamentals is key. Take the time to revisit the fundamentals and build a strong foundation. Even NCAA Division 1 athletes break down the fundamentals on their own and at practice.

Shake it off!
Mistakes happen all the time in volleyball. When they happen, shake it off and focus on improving for the next time. Learn from mistakes by asking your coach how to correct them and support your teammates by cheering for them when they make mistakes.

Communication is key.
Communication and enthusiasm go a long way in volleyball. Speak loud and clear with your teammates and coaches to help your team succeed. Also, keep a high energy level and cheer on your teammates when you are on court and on the bench.

Pick a program that suits your child.
Find a program that suits your child’s playing style and commitment level, along with your commitment level as a parent. Research the volleyball programs in your area and understand what is expected before signing up. For more information, see Ways to Play on page 8.

Get to know your child’s coach.
The ideal coach is accessible, honest and a good role model for your child. Understand his or her views on playing time, development and discipline, and let him or her know what your child needs to improve as a player. The key is open, honest communication.

Be your child’s biggest fan.
At practices and games, allow the coaches and referees to do their jobs and focus on being your child’s biggest fan. Shouting instructions from the sidelines can confuse and frustrate young players and their coaches. Instead, encourage your child to have fun and be a good teammate.

Social development is part of the game.
Volleyball teams are built on trust and communication. Your child will learn to interact with their teammates, coaches and referees and will build social skills that apply beyond the court. Sports are a great way for your child to meet new people and make friends.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/words-advice-volleyball-parents

William Morgan created volleyball in 1895 for a class at the YMCA by combining elements of basketball, tennis and handball into a game with less physical contact than basketball. The YMCA spread volleyball around the world through outreach and exchange programs.
FUNDAMENTALS OF THE GAME

Getting to know the fundamentals of volleyball is a great place to start for new players and parents.

Age-Group
The size of the court, length of the game, and the number of players on the court are all determined by age group and type of volleyball being played. Most programs provide materials like charts to help determine which age group a player falls into based on their birth date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR (11 &amp; UNDER)</td>
<td>2-6 PLAYERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR (12-18)</td>
<td>2-6 PLAYERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT (18+)</td>
<td>2-6 PLAYERS</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Score
Most matches use rally scoring, where a point is scored on each service when the ball hits the floor, goes out of bounds or a penalty is committed. 1 point per service.

Team
The number of players on the court for each team vary based on age and the type of volleyball being played. Volleyball is played in gyms, on sand, on grass, and even the snow!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH (11 &amp; UNDER)</td>
<td>2-6 PLAYERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUNIOR (12-18)</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Time
Volleyball matches are not timed, rather the match is divided into individual sets played to 25 points. The first team to win a majority of sets wins the match.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUNIOR</td>
<td>BEST 2 OF 3 ≈ 1 HOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH</td>
<td>BEST 2 OF 3 ≈ 1 HOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT</td>
<td>BEST 2 OF 3 ≈ 90 MINUTES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/fundamentals-indoor-volleyball

Volleyball gained a new element in 1916 after the game reached Southeast Asia. Players in the Philippines were making soft, lofty passes to each other and striking the ball downward over the net. Today, this offensive play is known as a set and spike. The Filipinos refer to the spike as “bomba.”
Three Hits
Each team is allowed three hits to get the ball over the net to the opposing team’s side. The three basic hits are a pass, set and spike. Passes and sets are used to pass the ball to another teammate while a spike is used to get the ball over the net.

Rotation and Substitution
When the team that received the serve scores a point, the team’s players rotate one position clockwise. Teams can substitute players in and out of the match, where the total number of substitutions for each team is limited but the timing of the subs is not.

At the Net
In general, touching any part of the net with anything besides the ball or a player’s hair is a violation that results in the opposing team receiving a point. Players can reach above the net without touching it to play the ball. A ball that touches the net can still be played.

Out of Bounds
A ball that lands out of bounds results in a point for the team that did not touch it last. Players are allowed to run out of bounds to hit the ball back into play.

Service
Each rally begins with a serve from the team that won the last point. The serving player must stay behind the back line and use an underhand or overhand approach to hit the ball over the net and in bounds on the opposing team’s side.

Playing the Ball
The ball can be played with any part of a players’ body, but cannot be held, thrown or pushed. Players most often direct the ball using their hands and forearms.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/basic-rules-indoor-volleyball

There are small rule changes for the different disciplines of volleyball. For example, in sitting volleyball – you can touch the net but the player cannot lift their bottom from the court when attacking. In beach volleyball, players use a slightly larger and heavier ball to play.
GETTING INTO POSITION

Volleyball positions vary based on age, style of play and competitive level. It’s generally encouraged for younger players to try all the positions before focusing in on one or two of their favorites. In the indoor game, there are three “front row players” and three “back row players” during each point. Players rotate one position clockwise after winning a point that the opposing team served.

Hitters
There are three main hitting positions: left, right and middle. Left and right hitters pass, attack and block balls for their team.

Setter
These players often play in the front right or back right position and are normally the first player to serve. Their job is to set the ball for the hitters to attack it.

Middle
These players play in center position of the front row and focus on blocking and spiking the ball.

Libero
This player wears a different color jersey than his or her teammates and is restricted to playing in the back row only. Liberos are tasked with receiving the serve, passing to the setter and digging incoming attacks.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/volleyball-positions

The first volleyball games were played using the inside bladder of basketballs until Spalding Company manufactured a volleyball in 1898. Today, Spalding still manufactures volleyballs along with Mikasa, Mizuno, Molten, Nike, Wilson and others.
VOLLEYBALL TERMS EXPLAINED

Like other sports, volleyball has a unique language of its own. Your child will pick up new words as he or she plays, but here are a few common phrases that are helpful to know beforehand.

10 foot line
The line that marks 10 feet from the net. Back row players are restricted in how they can attack the ball by this line. Back row players can jump from behind the line, attack the ball, and then land in front of the line. Many base defense positions are designed in relation to this line.

Pass
A technique used to receive the opponent’s hit and pass the ball to a fellow teammate by allowing the ball to bounce off your forearms while your hands are clasped together.

Ace
A serve that lands in bounds and goes unplayed by the opposing team, resulting in a point for the serving team.

Dig
To prevent a hard-hit attack from hitting the ground by passing it up with any part of the body. Players often dive or sprawl across the floor to make a dig.

Dump
When the setter sends the ball over the net on the second hit instead of setting it to a hitter.

Side-out
When the team that received the serve wins the point and is awarded the next serve.

Pancake
A player puts his or her hand flat on the floor and lets the ball bounce off the back of it to prevent the ball from hitting the floor. This emergency move is used to dig an attack or keep an errant pass alive.

Tip
A ball hit softly over the net, instead of attacking. Often used when the opponents are in position to block an attack.

Foot fault
When the server steps on or across the back line before serving the ball.

Floater
A serve with no spin that wobbles through the air like a knuckleball in baseball.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/volleyball-terms-explained

Rally scoring – where a point is awarded for every rally regardless of which team served – became the preferred method of scoring in 1999. The original format allowed only the team that served to score.
DRESSED TO PLAY

Volleyball requires very little gear to play, but your child will need a few things before he or she hits the court.

Here’s what is required for your child to get started:

**Athletic Shoes**
While most lightweight tennis shoes will do the trick, volleyball specific shoes have good grip to help your child move laterally across the court and absorb impact from jumping.

**Water Bottle**
Staying hydrated is crucial to succeeding in any sport – especially volleyball! Your child will be running and jumping for over an hour, keep water nearby.

**Knee Pads**
Volleyball players frequently slide across the court on their knees. A good pair of knee pads will save your child from painful abrasions.

**Volleyball**
A standard volleyball is between 25.5 and 26.5 inches in circumference and weights between 9.2 to 9.9 ounces. Indoor volleyballs are made of leather and slightly heavier than beach volleyballs. Beach balls are softer, bigger and lighter.

**Hair Accessories**
Athletes with long hair should use a headband, hair-tie or scrunchy to make a ponytail will keep your child’s hair out of his or her face during gameplay.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/dressed-play

Volleyball players are known to jump more than 300 times in a match. The fastest serve was recorded at 81.84 miles per hour.
Ways To Play

It’s a good idea to research the volleyball programs available to your child before signing him or her up to play. Each program differs in their structure, cost and commitment level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Volleyball</th>
<th>School Volleyball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> 10-18</td>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> Middle &amp; High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good for:</strong> Advanced players that want to increase their skills and play competitively.</td>
<td><strong>Good for:</strong> Those interested in playing with classmates and friends while representing their school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment:</strong> The club season typically goes for around six months and includes 2-3 practices per week and tournaments every other weekend. Club teams travel at metro, regional and state level and require a larger financial commitment than other leagues.</td>
<td><strong>Commitment:</strong> Practices occur daily after school with two to three matches per week. The competition and commitment level of school volleyball can vary greatly based on the school’s size and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure:</strong> Club volleyball is focused on building skills and playing at a competitive level. Players try out and are assigned to a team – or not – based on performance.</td>
<td><strong>Structure:</strong> Similar to club, players try out for school volleyball and are placed on teams according to skill and performance. School teams play against their counterparts from opposing schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adult Open National Championships have been held almost every year since USA Volleyball was founded in 1928. Adults of all ages participate in these championships with the oldest division being the Men's 78+ division.

WAYS TO PLAY (CONT.)

**Community/Recreational Volleyball**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Good for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young kids to adults</td>
<td>Anyone who wants to play volleyball for fun and to stay active.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment:</th>
<th>Structure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community volleyball features the lowest financial and time commitment. Teams practice once or twice a week, focusing on fundamentals and understanding the game. Players are not expected to train during the offseason.</td>
<td>Community leagues focus less on competition and more on learning and being active. Coaches are often parents or volunteers and players do not normally try out to be placed on teams.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, visit: sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/ways-play-volleyball
VOLEYBALL HIERARCHY

More than 200 countries in the world play the sport of volleyball, which can make it difficult to see how your child fits into the sport. Use this hierarchy to see how things fall into place in the United States.

For more information, visit:
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/hierarchy-volleyball
### Volleyball Hierarchy (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FIVB</strong></th>
<th>The Federation Internationale de Volleyball, formed in 1947, is the governing body responsible for all forms of volleyball on a global level.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORCECA</strong></td>
<td>The North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation oversees volleyball activities for the 35 member countries in its zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA Volleyball</strong></td>
<td>USA Volleyball is the national governing body for the sport in the United States, including beach, indoor, sitting, snow, and beach paravolley. USAV has 36 affiliated organizations including the YMCA, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS), the Boys and Girls Club of America, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RVAs</strong></td>
<td>Regional Volleyball Associations are the backbone of USAV. There are 40 regions and they are responsible for running the grassroots efforts and growing the game of volleyball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Localized Areas</strong></td>
<td>These can be referred to as areas, regions, locations, zones, or other names as well. They refer to the locations in a geographical area that teams are assigned to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Teams</strong></td>
<td>There are about 4,500 active clubs under USAV.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, visit:  
sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/hierarchy-volleyball

Volleyball was first introduced as an Olympic sport in 1964.
### VOLLEYBALL HIERARCHY (CONT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Players</th>
<th>USAV currently has more than 383,000 members which includes players, coaches, and officials.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JVA</td>
<td>The Junior Volleyball Association was founded in 2006 to give players and clubs an option other than the USAV. The JVA runs a series of tournaments throughout the season, whether they are part of the Power League or JVA Challenge Series. Clubs can be members of both JVA and USAV. The JVA also allows non-member teams to compete in their tournaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAU</td>
<td>The Amateur Athletic Union runs a series of tournaments that operate in one of their five divisions (from highest level of competition to lowest): Open, Premier, Club, Aspire, and Classic. The AAU is a member organization of the USSAV.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, visit: [sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/hierarchy-volleyball](sportsengine.com/article/volleyball/hierarchy-volleyball)

Volleyball was first called mintonette because of its similarity to badminton, but was renamed because the object of the game was to volley the ball back and forth.
ABOUT SPORTSENGINE
SportsEngine is the home of youth sports, enhancing the sports lives of more than 30 million athletes, parents, volunteers, administrators, families, and fans with intuitive software solutions that help build relationships, keep athletes safe, and simplify administrative tasks.

ABOUT USA VOLLEYBALL
USA Volleyball (USAV) is the national governing body for beach, indoor, sitting volleyball, snow and beach paravolley in the United States with over 360,000 members, responsible for selecting the Olympic and Paralympic volleyball teams. USA Volleyball also supports a network of regional associations, youth and junior programs, national championships, coaching and officials’ training, grassroots development, and the SafeSport initiative.