

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

4v4 Volleyball Training - JUDGING BALL CONTACT

The Head Ref's Job

Judging ball contact is arguably the most difficult aspect of officiating volleyball. Technically, whenever a player receives a ball with both hands, it's a double hit because the hands aren't ever exactly in sync. However, the goal in judging ball contact is not to call every single infraction but rather to maintain consistency in what is allowable. When judging ball handling, use the four R's (Receive, Release, Result and Reaction) to guide your decisions.

Receiving the Ball

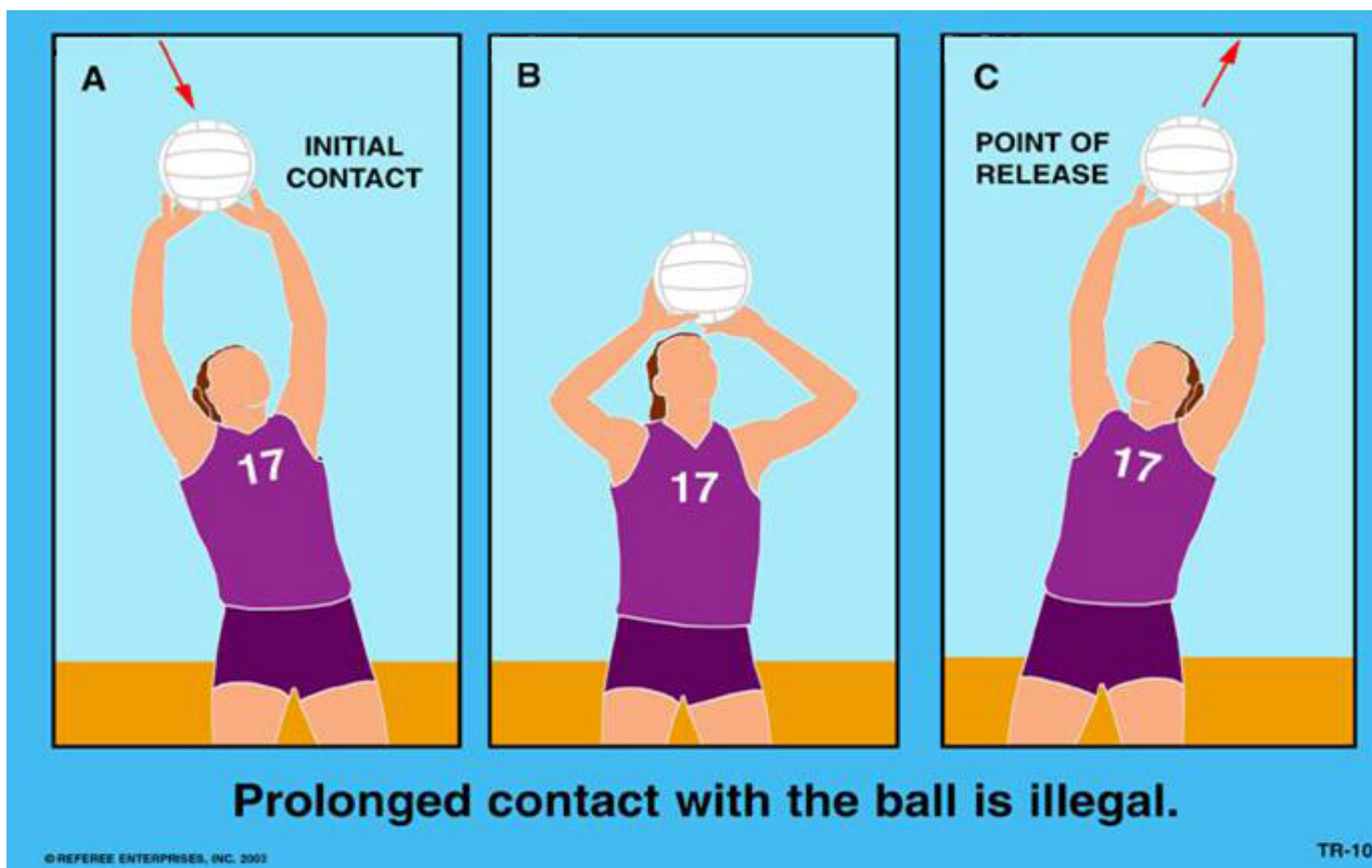
When receiving a ball, if the second hand trails the first but the ball keeps moving and is handled cleanly, that's fine. Double-hit violations occur when the ball is bobbled from one hand to the other. Try to focus in on the ball contacting the hands to see if it bounces from one hand to the other. If it does, blow your whistle for a double-hit violation.

Know This:

The most important aspect of judging ball contact is **consistency**.

Releasing the Ball

The ball must also be released instantly upon receipt, i.e., it can't stop. The leeway on how brief should be the same for every contact. Did the ball pause? Was it caught, lifted or over-controlled? Did it roll along the hands or body? Was it in contact for a long time or long distance? Was it palmed or tossed like a basketball? On a setter dump, directional block or power tip, was the hand unmoving (not already thrusting) then loaded up at the point of contact? Answering 'yes' to any of these questions should result in a held ball violation.



Result of the Play

Players, captains and fans tend to be influenced by the result — ugly, unexpected, sound, or most common, spin. These outcomes may sway the players or crowd but shouldn't affect your decisions. Was the ball received and released properly or not? Be consistent. After release, the ball can rotate some and be legit. Spinning like a top may be okay, but that's a warning sign. Again, consistency is key. Uphold an even standard for the entire match that is accepted by both teams and doesn't take the game away from the players. Adjust from match to match to meet these expectations.

Reaction to the Play

Dissenting reactions must not sway you. Remember, calls are all about angles. You shouldn't whistle anything you don't observe. Don't guess. Still, don't dismiss this valuable difference of opinion. Review the situation mentally. What did these critics see from their vantage point that we didn't see? Maybe they're right. Nail it in the future.

Another type of ball handling that frequently troubles officials is the tip or dink. A tip is a hand thrust by a player attacking the ball by controlling and directing it with finger tips. It is one ball handling play that often falls in the "gray area" of being legal. The difficulty in judging a tip stems from the controlling and directing actions and the occasional surprise element of an unexpected tip.

Types

There are two types of tips that are differentiated by the attacking speed. A regular or soft tip is done with finesse. A power tip is done with force. A play in which a player in the act of setting decides at the last moment to direct the ball over the net with the finger tips of one hand technically is a tip but is better known as a dump. Regardless of type or label, all tips are judged the same way.

Duration of contact

The ball can be contacted on a tip only for a brief interval, both in time and in distance. Time-wise, the ball contact must be momentary. The attacker should not be allowed time to contemplate where to direct the ball during contact. Distance-wise, the ball must be released near to its initial contact point. Ball contact should not last through the full range of the attacker's arm span. Watch the entire duration of contact when judging the legality of a tip. Do not look ahead of the actual ball contact.

Contact of ball

The ball cannot be caught, i.e., the attacker's hand cannot stop or move backward on initial contact with the ball. On a power tip, force is used to propel the ball. The hand must already be in forward motion before contact is made with the ball. That way, the ball is legally rebounding upon contact. Otherwise, it is being caught first before being moved forward. It's a held ball violation if the hitter makes contact with the ball, reloads, and then pushes the ball forward. During contact, the hand must move continuously forward at the same speed without changing course from its initial direction. Giving upward impetus to the ball or cradling it from underneath is allowed on a tip provided the ball instantly bounces off the fingers. If the ball contact is extended, the ball cannot come to rest. Theoretically, it should drop freely from the fingers if the attacking motion were stopped. The ball cannot be thrown or be analogous to a baseball toss. Any subsequent hand actions after the ball is released, such as breaking of the wrist, is immaterial. The palm of the hand must not come in contact with the ball during a tip. Else, it is a caught, held, lifted, or thrown ball.

Like other ball handling plays, deciding what is a violation on a tip is a judgment call. Using the above guidelines, set your own judgment parameters as the match develops and be consistent in properly judging its legality no matter what transpires during the ball contact.

Judging Ball Contact Quiz:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1AZA17aSrw61qxHM1LyTibVR9bDe7rmbH5UrY0VoZVrc/viewform>