

NBVL

National Beach Volleyball League

Rules & Regulations — 2026 Season

League Overview

The NBVL is a competitive beach volleyball league operating in 2026 in Calgary. The league consists of two tiers: the NBVL (top tier) and the V-League (Recreational to Competitive tiers). Both leagues run concurrently through the summer. Teams may move between tiers in the V-League through performance, and athletes may be called up or substituted from V-League to the NBVL based on rules outlined below.

Registration

All Athletes

- All athletes must first register as a pair in the V-League (men's or women's division). V-League registration is the entry point for **all participants** into the 2026 season. (See V-League section below.)
- Athletes that do not qualify to the NBVL Feature League will start V-League play running from May 21 to August 20, 2026.
- See NBVL Feature League and NBVL V-League sections below for further details on each season.

NBVL Feature League Qualifier Registration

- Pairs who wish to compete for an NBVL spot must separately register for one or more NBVL Qualifier Tournaments.
- Registering for a qualifier indicates the pair's intention to compete in the NBVL if they meet the qualifying criteria
- Pairs who do not register for any qualifier, or who do not qualify, will automatically be scheduled for V-League matches starting May 21st.

NBVL Team Qualification

Carry Forward Pairs/Teams

- Men's and Women's pairs who advanced to the final 4 of the 2025 NBVL Season and choose to continue to play as a pair for the same Team for the 2026 season are eligible to bypass the Qualifying tournaments detailed below.
- Eligible 2025 teams: CBVA, Dome Defenders, The Beach YYC Seagulls, Volley Vipers.

- An Exceptional Athlete Replacement Request to bypass qualification can be accepted for a valid reason that would cause one of the originally signed athletes to miss the entire 2026 season (e.g., injury, pregnancy, relocation, etc.). The designated replacement must have participated in a previous NBVL Season.
- With regards to the drafted athlete (3rd athlete) from one of the eligible 2025 teams, a pair does not need to choose the 3rd ahead of another athlete to be the designated replacement in case of an approved Exceptional Athlete Replacement Request, however no exceptional designation is required if either originally signed player opts to play the season with the 3rd from their 2025 team.
- Men's and Women's pairs who advance to the 2026 Men's and Women's Semi Finals that choose to continue playing together and for the same Team will be eligible to bypass the 2027 Qualifying process.

Qualification Format

- There will be 3 single-elimination Qualifier Tournaments held prior to the NBVL season.
- Each tournament is a single-day event.
- Tournament dates: May 9, May 10, and May 16.

Qualification Spots

- 1 team spot per gender onto the NBVL feature teams will be available at each qualifier tournament (1 men's pair spot and 1 women's pair spot).
- The remaining spots per gender will be awarded to the best-finishing pairs across all three tournaments that did not already qualify outright. Best finishing teams will be determined by a cumulative finishing position, ranked by each team's **best 2 results over the 3 qualifying events**.
- If there is a tie between 2 or more teams for cumulative finish, tiebreak will be settled in the following order:
 - Matches won/lost ratio between the tied teams specifically
 - Total Matches won/lost ratio across all qualifiers
 - Sets won/lost ratio across all qualifiers
 - Points won/lost ratio across all qualifiers
- Detailed qualifier results, including confirmation of qualified pairs, will be available online by 12pm on Monday following each tournament.
- A total of 8 NBVL teams will compete in the 2026 season, each consisting of 1 men's pair and 1 women's pair.

Team Sponsors

Sponsorship Rules

- Each NBVL team will be associated with a Team Sponsor for the 2026 season.
- Team Sponsors may display branding on provided player tops and any other league-approved materials.

- Sponsor brand categories must not conflict with official league-wide sponsorships. Details will be confirmed prior to the start of the season.

Qualifying Pair Selection

- Returning pairs who earned their NBVL spot in the previous season will automatically return to their same team for the 2026 season.
- For teams with unfilled spots following the qualifier tournaments, both Team Sponsors and qualified pairs will simultaneously submit their preferences to NBVL Officials by 11:59pm on May 19th (the Monday following the final qualifier):
 - Team Sponsors will submit a ranked list of all qualified pairs for each gender, from most to least preferred. All qualified pairs must be ranked — no pairs may be omitted.
 - Qualified pairs will submit a ranked list of all teams with available spots, from most to least preferred.
- NBVL Officials will use the submitted rankings to match pairs to teams, prioritizing the best mutual fit across both lists.
- In the event that a match cannot be determined clearly from the rankings, final placement will be at the discretion of NBVL Officials.
- All placements will be communicated privately to the relevant teams and pairs.
- All submitted rankings are strictly confidential and will only be seen by NBVL Officials. Rankings will never be made public.
- Team Sponsors and qualifying pairs are encouraged to build relationships with one another during the pre-season qualifier tournaments.

NBVL Season

Schedule

- The NBVL will have 1 optional Pre-Season game night on Thursday, May 21.
- The NBVL Regular Season will run every Thursday evening from May 28 through July 16.
- There will be no NBVL matches on July 9th to accommodate teams wanting to travel to the Vancouver Open.
- Post-season events will be scheduled for August 6, 13, and 20 (All-star game/awards, etc.).

Teams

- Each NBVL team consists of 1 men's pair and 1 women's pair (4 athletes total).
- The 2026 NBVL season will consist of 8 teams.

Regular Season Match Format

- Each matchup will consist of one men's match and one women's match, followed by a mandatory Overtime set.
- Each men's and women's match consists of 2 sets played to 21 points, win by 2.
- The Overtime set will be played to 21 points, win by 2.
- Net heights follow FIVB standards: 2.43m for men's matches, 2.24m for women's matches.
- Rules of play follow FIVB standards, as the venue permits.

Standings & Scoring

- Teams earn 1 point in the standings for every set they win during a matchup, including the Overtime set.
- Teams earn 1 additional point for the Win if they win the higher number of sets on the night.
- A total of 6 points will be distributed between the 2 teams per matchup (2 sets per match × 2 matches + 1 OT set + 1 Win point).

Overtime Set

- A mandatory Overtime set will be played at the end of every regular season matchup, regardless of match results.
- The Overtime set is a single set to 21 points, win by 2, played simultaneously across both courts (men's and women's), alternating play between courts point-to-point.
- The court that finished their match first will play the first point of the Overtime set.
- Team captains will meet with referees for a coin toss. The winner will choose either service/reception OR side for both genders.
- Play alternates between courts after each point (e.g., if the men's court plays an odd-numbered point, the women's court plays the next even-numbered point).
- If the men's team on one side wins a point, the women's team on the same side will serve for the next point.
- Teams switch sides every time the scores total a multiple of 7 (7, 14, 21, etc.).
- The server for either court will remain the same only if a point is earned on serve by both the men's and women's teams consecutively.
- Referees will enforce a 5-second maximum between the end of a rally on one court and the start of the rally on the other.
- Each team is allowed 1 timeout during the Overtime set.
- The Overtime set result contributes to the team's standings points (1 point for a win).

Team Champions

- The team with the most points in the standings at the end of the Regular Season on July 16th will be crowned NBVL Team Champions.

Doubles Playoffs

Qualification

- The men's and women's pairs from the top 6 teams in the regular season standings will advance to the Doubles Playoffs.
- Men's and women's divisions will be contested separately.

Play-In Tournament — July 23

- Pairs seeded 3rd through 6th in the league's final standings will compete in a men's and women's play-in tournament to determine the final two spots for each semi-final round.
- Play-in bracket format (per gender):
 - 3rd seed vs. 4th seed — winner advances to semi-finals.
 - 5th seed vs. 6th seed — winner advances to play the loser of the 3/4 matchup.
 - Winner of that second game advances to semi-finals.

Semi-Finals & Finals — July 30

- The top 2 seeds in Regular Season play will advance both their pairs directly to the semi-finals.
- Semi-finals and finals for both men's and women's divisions will be played on July 30.
- Match format for playoffs will follow FIVB match protocol, as the venue permits.

Roster Rules

Standard Roster

- Each NBVL team roster consists of 4 athletes: 1 men's pair and 1 women's pair.
- Teams will no longer hold a permanent 3rd roster spot.
- If one or more players must miss an NBVL matchup, teams may pull up an athlete from the V-League pool of players for no penalty.
- A replacement player from outside of the V-League pool of athletes may be accepted, but a \$25 activation fee will be charged per new athlete per night. Unregistered athletes will also be required to complete a participation waiver each time.

Permanent Roster Replacement

- The reason for replacement must be a long-term or season-ending circumstance (e.g., injury, pregnancy, relocation, or extended absence). A replacement will not be granted for short-term unavailability.
- The replacement athlete must be selected from the V-League pool and must have played in at least 1 V-League match prior to the request in order to be eligible.

- In the event that a qualifying injury occurs prior to the start of the NBVL Regular Season, the eligibility requirement shall be fulfilled by the replacement athlete participating in the opening night of V-League matches on May 21st.
- The called-up athlete may find a permanent replacement for themselves in the V-League if they choose, at no cost for the new athlete. The new V-League athlete must complete all required participation waivers.
- The request must be submitted to league officials in writing, with a brief explanation of the circumstance. Approval is at the discretion of NBVL Officials.
- Permanent roster replacements will not be permitted after July 9th.
- Once approved, the original athlete may not return to the roster for the remainder of the season.
- All permanent roster changes will be reflected publicly on the league standings and website.

Player Trades

- Two teams may trade players of the same gender if both teams submit a trade request in writing to NBVL Officials. All trades are subject to approval at the discretion of NBVL Officials.

NBVL V-League

Structure

- The V-League operates in two separate divisions: men's and women's.
- Teams (pairs) compete on the same evenings as the NBVL, with extended dates (every Thursday, May 21 – August 20).
- Depending on the number of registered teams, the V-League will be organized into performance tiers.
- Teams can expect to play 2 matches per night in the V-League.
- If a player needs to miss a game night for any reason, including to play in an NBVL feature match, it is their responsibility to find a replacement player to cover their V-League matches for the evening. If struggling to find a replacement, please give organizers at least 24 hours' notice in order to provide assistance.
- Any no-shows for scheduled matches without notice will result in a forfeit and default for the team. Teams will receive a warning for the first default and will be removed from the league if a second default occurs.
- **V-League teams may designate up to 2 league nights** in advance over the course of the season that they will not attend, with no default or penalties. Teams must reach out at least 2 weeks prior to the designated game night(s) for scheduling purposes.

Standings & Tier Movement

- Teams earn points for every set they win against opponents each week.
- Tier placements will be reviewed and adjusted every 2 to 4 weeks based on team results. Teams may be moved up or down tiers accordingly at the discretion of league organizers.

V-League Playoffs

- A playoff week will be held during the final 2 to 3 weeks (August 6, 13, 20) for all V-League divisions.
- Format and bracket details will be confirmed 1 week prior to the start of the season.

Player Availability & Substitutions

- Pairs are responsible for finding their own replacement player(s) if a partner cannot attend a scheduled match.
- Replacement players in V-League do not need to be previously registered, but will need to sign a participation waiver if they haven't played previously in the season.

NBVL Callups from V-League

- An NBVL team may call up a V-League athlete to play in an NBVL match, provided the callup does not interfere with the athlete's scheduled V-League match that evening.
- If the athlete's NBVL and V-League matches do not conflict in scheduling, the athlete may play in both.
- If there is a scheduling conflict, the V-League athlete must arrange a replacement for themselves in the V-League in order to be eligible to play in the NBVL that evening.
- Callups do not need to be communicated to NBVL officials in advance, but penalties will be incurred if a default occurs as a result of a Callup without letting anyone know of difficulties finding replacements.

Media, Sponsorship & Uniforms

Uniforms

- Athletes who qualify for the NBVL will be provided team tops, which are mandatory for all NBVL match play.
- V-League athletes are not required to wear matching tops.
- Matching bottoms are not required in either the NBVL or V-League.
- There are no restrictions on garments worn underneath playing tops.

Sponsorship

- Athletes are permitted to display personal sponsorship on their uniforms, provided the sponsor's brand category does not conflict with that of their Team's existing sponsorship.

Media Coverage

[Details regarding media coverage, online streaming, and broadcasting will be confirmed and added to this document prior to the start of the season.]

General

- All match play rules not explicitly covered in this document will default to FIVB standards.
- The league reserves the right to amend rules and regulations as necessary. All registered participants will be notified of any changes.
- Any disputes or rule interpretations are subject to final decision by NBVL Officials.