

THE LIBERO PLAYER RULES

The libero (lee-bah-ro) is intended to be a player who specializes in defense and serve reception. When the libero enters the match, the entry is not considered one of the allowed team substitutions. When a libero replaces a back row player, it is called a "replacement" rather than a substitution. The number of replacements is unlimited. The libero can replace any back row player (then must be replaced by that same player). The libero can replace any number of teammates in the same game. For the 2009 volleyball season, NFHS Rules 6-3-2E and 10-4-6 allows that the libero, in one rotation, may replace a player in the service position to serve. (see enclosed information: Allowing the Libero to Serve)

A different libero can be designated for each set, but the designation must be made on the lineup sheet when it is submitted before the set. If no libero is used in a set, the team is still restricted to the team substitutions that the rules allow.

Playing with a libero player is optional. Teams do not have to have a libero player.

NFHS Volleyball Rules will allow the use of the libero player during the 2009-10 school year. The following rules will be effective with the 2009 volleyball season and will be used in post season tournaments (district, divisional and state).

THE SPECIFIC RULES FOR THE LIBERO PLAYER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- A libero may not start the match.
- The libero must always be listed on the roster. If the player is playing only the libero position, write only the libero number. Ex. Libero #4 is recorded on the roster as 4. If the player is both a regular player and a libero for different sets during the match, but has the same number on both uniforms, record only the player's number. Ex. Regular uniform #4, libero number is #4 – record #4. If the player is both a regular player and a libero for different sets during the match and has a different number uniform for each position, then both uniforms numbers must be recorded. Ex. A players' regular uniform number is 15 and her libero number is 4, recorded 15/L4. (L for libero) Remember, there can be no duplication of any numbers for any player, this also applies to any number of liberos used, listed on the roster. On the roster, record each player that is both a regular player and/or a libero during the match. (Penalty for the libero entering the match not listed on the roster – point/loss of rally when the inaccuracy is discovered. The roster can then be corrected. The libero may then enter that set provided the libero was designated on the line-up sheet for that set.)
- A libero, when used, must be designated on the lineup sheet prior to each set and there can only be one libero designated per set.
- If a libero is designated for a set, the libero's number must be recorded on the lineup sheet for that set. If a libero has not been listed on the lineup sheet for a set, the team may not use a libero in that set. (Penalty for the libero entering the match not listed on the line-up sheet – unnecessary delay – charged time out. If the team has used all of its time-outs – point/loss of rally is awarded the opponent).
- The libero may be designated as the playing captain.
- Only one libero replacement per dead ball, and that replacement must be completed before the start of the next rally.
- The libero may be used as an exceptional substitution for an injured player if no other legal substitutes are available. When no longer playing as a libero, that player must wear the same uniform as her teammates, and the team continues play with no libero player.
- The libero can not be used as a substitute for a disqualified teammate. If the libero is disqualified while playing, the player whom she replaced must replace her. The team continues play with no libero player.
- The libero can play as a non-libero in subsequent sets. The player must wear the same uniform as her teammates.

- All players, except the server, and including the libero, shall be within the team's playing area and may be in contact with the boundary lines or center line, but may not have any part of the body touching the floor outside those lines. All players, including the libero, shall be in correct serving order.

Libero Playing Actions?

- The libero is restricted to performing as a back row player and is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere (including playing court and free zone) if, at the moment of contact, the ball is entirely above the top of the net. (illegal back row attack – point/loss of rally)
- The libero can not block or attempt to block. (illegal block – point/loss of rally)
- If a libero sets the ball using overhand finger action while on or in front of the attack line, any teammate who completes an attack of that ball, if at the moment of contact, the ball is completely above the height of the net, is an illegal attacker. (Illegal back row attack, official will indicate the libero with extended arm and open hand – point/loss of rally). The ball may be freely attacked by a teammate if the libero makes a finger-tip pass from behind the attack line. Other ball contacts (non-fingertip action) are not subject to this restriction.
- Libero cannot rotate to the front row (illegal alignment)

Libero Uniform?

- The libero must wear a uniform shirt or jersey that is in distinct COLOR contrast to shirts worn by other members of the team and must be recognized from all angles as being in clear contrast to and distinct from the other members of the team. The style and trim of the libero's shirt or jersey may differ from her teammates', but her shorts must be **like-colored** to her teammates.
- The libero uniform shirt must have a legal number as prescribed by NFHS volleyball rules (Rule 4, Section 2).
- The numbering system for the libero is for the libero to **either** wear the same number on both her libero jersey and her regular playing jersey, or the libero may have a regular jersey number and a different libero uniform number. The libero must always be listed on the roster. If the player is playing only the libero position, write only the libero number. Ex. Libero #4 is recorded on the roster as 4. If the player is both a regular player and a libero for different sets during the match, but has the same number on both uniforms, record only the player's number. Ex. Regular uniform #4, libero number is #4 – record #4. If the player is both a regular player and a libero for different sets during the match and has a different number uniform for each position, then both uniforms numbers must be recorded. Ex. A players' regular uniform number is 15 and her libero number is 4, recorded 15/L4. (L for libero) Remember, there can be no duplication of any numbers for any player, this also applies to any number of liberos used, listed on the roster. Using the traditional "home and away" uniforms works very well provided the color of the uniform is very distinct. If the school does not have a duplicate set of uniforms that are contrasting in color, then specific libero uniforms must be purchased (ex. a t-shirt). Number placement must be regulation, however it is legal for the libero to have a center number while the rest of the team has a shoulder placed number.
- All non-libero players in a match must wear identical uniforms, so if a player ceases to be a libero in a subsequent set, she must wear a uniform identical to her teammates. She is required to retain the same jersey and libero number throughout the match.
- If a striped libero shirt is used, it should not have any color that appears on more than 25 percent of the **body of the uniform** worn by non-libero players. **In determining the body of the uniforms, the sleeves and collar should be ignored.**

Libero Replacements?

- The libero is allowed to replace any player in a back row position, and, in one rotation, the libero may replace a player in the service position to serve. (See information on allowing the libero to serve – below)
- Replacements involving the libero are not counted as one of the 18 regular substitutions. These replacements are unlimited, but there must be a rally/loss of rally (which can include a playover) between two libero replacements unless the libero is on the court and is replacing the player moving into the serving position (RB). A team may exercise one replacement per dead ball.
- The player whom the libero replaced can only replace the libero (penalty for wrong player replacing the libero – unnecessary delay – charged time-out if discovered or corrected before the signal/whistle for serve. (Illegal alignment is called if not detected until after the signal/whistle for serve and Rules 6-3 and 10-4 Penalties will be applied).
- Libero replacements may take place only after the end of a rally or at the start of each set after the umpire has checked the starting lineup, as well as any time the ball is out of play and before the signal/whistle for service, (penalty for the libero entering the court after the whistle has blown – illegal alignment – point/loss of rally is awarded the opponent).
- A libero replacement cannot take place during a time-out when the teams are not on the court.
- A libero and the player replaced by the libero must enter or leave the court only by the sideline in front of the libero's team bench between the attack line and the end line. It is important for the libero exchange and substitutions to be easily distinguished from each other. There will be no signal from the umpire for the exchange.
- When a team is making both a libero replacement and a substitution for the player involved in the libero exchange the following protocol should be observed:
 - The player whom the libero replaced must step onto the court between the attack line and the end line and make the exchange with the libero (Ex: #8 replaces the libero between the attack line and the end line.)
 - Now #8 is to be substituted for by #3. #3 must enter the sub zone and wait at the sideline until #8 moves to where #3 is waiting in the sub zone. The substitution then occurs pursuant to normal substitution procedures (players await authorization by umpire before making the switch).

Redesignation of a New Libero When the Libero is Injured?

If the libero is injured and cannot continue play, she must first be replaced by the player whom she replaced. Then, a new libero can be redesignated using the following criteria:

- Redesignation does not need to occur immediately after the injury and replacement, but may occur at the discretion of the coach (es).
- When redesignation does occur, any substitution may be redesignated as libero for an injured libero. The injured libero can not play in the remainder of that set.
- The player redesignated as the libero must follow the libero uniform rule and must remain the libero for the rest of the set. The redesignated libero's uniform must have a unique number (not worn by any teammate) but not necessarily the same number with which the player started the match.

Tracking the Libero?

- Ideally, each home team is responsible for supplying a person to track the libero replacements to ensure that: 1) once the libero is replaced, at least one serve must take place before the libero can replace another player unless the libero is on the court and is replacing the player moving into the serving position (RB); and 2) when the libero leaves the court, the player replacing the libero must be the same player that the libero replaced when she last entered the game.
- However, **if a school does not use the libero player**, the school that does use the libero must provide the official libero tracker for the match. This person will sit alongside

the official scorekeeper. This must be clearly established prior to a team traveling to a match. If a traveling team is to provide the tracker, the school must know this well in advance.

- Libero replacements will be tracked on a separate form (*libero tracking sheet*).

2009 NFHS Volleyball Rule Revision Allowing the Libero to Serve NFHS Rule 6-3-2E and 10-4-6

In one rotation, the libero may replace a player in the service position to serve. The libero may only serve in one position in the serving order. If the libero is in the set immediately prior to moving to a serving position there does not have to be a rally between libero replacements if the libero serves the next rally.

Procedure:

1. The libero and the replacement must enter or leave the court in the libero replacement zone, over the sideline between the attack line and the end line.
2. A team is assessed an unnecessary delay for improper libero replacement procedures.
3. In one rotation, the libero can replace the player in the service position and serve the next rally even if she is already on the court in replacement of another back row player.
4. In this situation, the libero does not have to exit the court before replacing the player in the service position.
5. The coach is not required to indicate on the lineup sheet the position where the libero will serve. At any point in the set, the coach can determine the position where the libero will serve by simply having the libero replace that server.
6. Once the libero serves in a particular position in a set that is the **only** position where the libero is allowed to serve. However, the libero is not required to serve in that position for all subsequent rotations. The starting player, a legal substitute, or the libero can serve any rally that takes place whenever that position is in the service position.
7. The scorer must record on the scoresheet when the libero serves during each set. The libero tracker must record the position where the libero serves on the Libero Tracking Sheet as well.

(Also see Duties for Scorekeeper and Duties for Libero Tracker by going to mhsa.org, click on volleyball and click on correct link)