



Sand Volleyball Rules

Introduction

Born Sports League was founded with the vision to strive to make the world a better place through sports by bringing together a diverse and inclusive community to have fun, create a sense of belonging and acceptance, and give back to the communities in which we play. The purpose of BSL is to engage members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends, and allies in healthy, active sports and activities by creating and managing structured games, leagues and tournaments in a safe, consistent, and organized fashion.

Our mission is to bring together LGBTQ+ and ally people to build community through organized sports and create an experience that is inclusive, supportive, affordable, fun, and gives back to the community.

Born Sports League follows these principles in order and in precedence. At no time shall any higher ranked principal be compromised for the sake of another by any official, team, or player.

- 1) **Safety:** All measures will be taken so that any and all activities rank safety as the league's number one priority.
- 2) **Participation / Inclusion:** All people are welcome in BSL games and activities, and participation is fundamental to all involved.
- 3) **Respect:** All people affiliated with BSL, its teams or its events shall treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, both on and off the field.
- 4) **Fun:** The purpose of BSL in its core, is to foster a fun, philanthropic, social environment.
- 5) **Honesty / Fair Play:** It is expected that all players, teams and officials shall adhere to a strict honor code at all times.
- 6) **Competition:** While BSL games and activities keep score and award champions, at no time shall any player, team, or official allow the competitive nature inherent in sports take precedence over any of the above founding principles.



LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

1. **Sportsmanship:**

Officials, players and their guests shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times, including both on and off the field. BSL expects the highest level of respect from anyone affiliated or attending our events and conduct unbecoming will not be tolerated at any time.
2. **Agreement:** By participating in an BSL event or activity, each competitor agrees
 - a) To be governed by the rules as presented by BSL, both as written and in the spirit and intent of said rules.
 - b) To accept any decisions or penalties imposed by said rules.
 - c) To respect all aspects of the league's priorities.
 - d) To treat all materials, equipment, and venues with great care including the environment in which we are playing. This includes, but is not limited to, garbage, foul language, smoking, illegal substance, weapons, and alcohol policies and damage to property.
3. **Drug & Weapons Policy:** Born Sports League is a drug and weapon-free zone, and any use or distribution of any illegal substances or the possession of any weapons of any kind while attending or engaging in any BSL sponsored events is strictly prohibited.
 - a) **Alcohol:** While may or may not be regulated by venue restrictions, any public intoxication will not be tolerated and is subject to disciplinary actions, including ejection from the venue for the remainder of the day.
4. **Weather:** Outdoor activities may be cancelled or delayed under these guidelines.
 - a) Lightning within a 30-mile radius, postpones activities for 30 minutes.
 - b) Heavy rain of any kind postpones games for one hour following the conclusion of rain.
 - c) If similar conditions return within the postponement periods, activities will then be cancelled for the day and re-scheduled according to the rain date calendar.
 - d) Games will be cancelled following a 1-hour continual period of heavy rain.
 - e) Activities may proceed if the rain is considered light and variable, and the field conditions are safe.
 - f) Should any venue or facility be closed or restricted in use, BSL will advise through e-mail and social media communications as soon as possible.
5. **Field / Venue Rules:** All rules and policies put in place by the venue must be respected and will be strictly enforced. (Such as, no pets, no smoking, no loud music, no alcohol, etc.)
6. **Discrimination:** BSL has a strict no-discrimination policy. If anyone feels they have been discriminated against for any reason they are to report it to league management immediately. Any person affiliated with an BSL event making racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual orientation slurs or actions are subject to disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal from the league.



7. **Bullying & Taunting:** Teasing, shouting, arguing, cheering against, complaining, name-calling, excessive swearing, verbally or physically abusing or intimidating players or game officials in any way (even if intended as a joke, but not received in that manner) will not be tolerated under any circumstances, regardless if it occurs in person, off venue, or on-line.

Off the field behavior, including at social events, public spaces, or even on social media that project any players, teams or league officials in an aggressive or highly negative light will be considered the same as behavior on the field, and is subject to the same disciplinary policies and procedures.

8. **Disciplinary Policies:** Apply to any infraction listed or unlisted that is deemed unsportsmanlike or is contrary to the BSL core philosophy and principles.
9. **Injury Policies:** Safety is and will always be the number one priority for Born Sports League and the following policies are in place for everyone's well-being.
 - a) Injured players may be replaced or can exit a game at any time without penalties.
 - b) Any injury to the head that causes any dizziness or unconsciousness must be reported immediately to the attending league officials who shall stop game play to assess the situation. Emergency medical officials will be called for any head related injuries.
 - c) Any injured player that is actively bleeding must exit the field of play and cannot return until the bleeding has stopped or has been treated and covered.
 - d) The BSL will have, on hand, at least one First Aid kit at every venue for use by its players and officials as needed.
 - e) Injured players that required immediate medical attention must provide a doctor's note verifying that they are recovered and physically capable prior to returning to active play.



GAME PLAY

Fundamental Rules

1. **Matches:** Consist of best of 3 games with rally scoring. In rally scoring, a point is scored on every single rally, regardless of which side served. The first two games go to 21 points. If a third game is necessary, it will be a tie breaker to 15 points. For each game, the winning team must win by 2 points (no cap). If the match time finishes before the tie breaker is completed, the team with the most points at the end of match time wins. Teams shall switch sides in between each game. For the tie breaker, it is recommended that teams switch sides when either of the teams has first reached 8 points, but Team Captains may agree to forego this tie breaker switch if desired.
2. **Uniforms:** While teams are welcome to create and wear custom shirts for league play, **Born Sports League strongly encourages the inclusion of the official BSL logo** on all custom apparel. Visibility of the BSL logo helps promote league identity, unity, and community pride across all teams. To request a high-quality version of the logo, please email info@bornsportsleague.com.
3. **Warm Ups:** A 5-minute warm up is allowed prior to each match. Team Captains will do a round of rock-paper-scissors to decide serve/receive or side of court.
4. **Player Rotation:**
 - a. Each team is welcome to use any formation they would like, but service must be rotated in the same order throughout each game. Service rotation can be changed in between games if desired.
 - b. For 4v4, each team must field a minimum of 3 players and a maximum of 4 players during gameplay. If a team has more than 4 players present, players will rotate into service.
 - c. A minimum of **2 registered players must be present** to avoid a forfeit. See Rule 6.e for additional information.
5. **Time Limits:**
 - a. Each match (up to 3 games) is allotted 45 minutes. Matches may continue beyond the allotted time if court availability, venue operations, and league scheduling permit, as determined by the Born Sports League Board of Directors or Volleyball Director.
 - b. Each team may request 1 timeout during each match. A timeout shall be no longer than 1 minute.
6. **Substitutions:** May play on any team under these restrictions:
 - a. Regular season games only (not tournaments). Roster players may substitute during the regular season.
 - b. Registered players for a lower division may substitute for a registered player in a higher division, but not the other way around.



- c. Each non-roster substitute player must sign a waiver and pay a substitution fee (\$10/day) prior to playing. The substitution fee is to be paid for each game day.
- d. If a team utilizes a substitution, and the substitution fees of each of the non-roster substitute players are not paid in full within a week of the games in which the substitution(s) played, those games shall be retroactively forfeited.
- e. If a team utilizes 5 or more registered players in a game, substitutes are not permitted for that game.
 - a. A minimum of 2 registered players must be present to avoid a forfeit. Substitutes may be used to bring the total number of players to 5, however, the number of subs is to not exceed the number of registered players. For example:
 - i. If a team has 4 registered players, 1 substitute is allowed.
 - ii. If a team has 3 registered players, 2 substitutes are allowed.
 - iii. If a team has 2 registered players, 2 substitutes are allowed.

7. Division Placement: The Born Sports League Board of Directors reserves the right to place, promote, demote, or move any team into the division best suited for that team based on league standings, season outcomes, competitive balance, and the overall integrity of league play. All division placement decisions are made at the sole discretion of the Board and are final.

Game Rules

1. Service:

- a. Service must be initiated from BEHIND the respective back line of the court. Serving players may serve from anywhere along and behind the back line.
- b. Players may serve underhand or overhand.
- c. A serve must go completely over the net to be received by the opposing team.
- d. Service let: If a serve contacts the net and goes over to the opponent's side, the serve is legal.
- e. Serve-receive: Players on the opposing team shall not block or attack a serve. If they do so, the point shall be awarded to the serving team.
- f. A serving player will continue to serve if their team wins the point.
- g. A serving player's turn terminates when any of the following occurs:
 - i. A serve does not go over the net onto the opposing side.
 - ii. A serve goes out of bounds without a touch from the opposing team.
 - iii. The ball goes down on their side of the court (also referred as a side out).

2. Returning Play:

- a. Players are allowed a maximum of three touches to return the ball over the net to the opposing side.
- b. Any part of your body can be used to perform a touch on the ball.
- c. Caught or thrown balls are considered an illegal touch, and the point shall be awarded to the opposing team.



- d. A player may not perform 2 consecutive touches on the ball (also referred as a double contact or a double). If a player performs a double, the point shall be awarded to the opposing team. The only exception is when a player contacts the ball while attempting a block. If a player attempts to block and touches the ball, but the ball continues onto that player's side of the court, the block attempt shall not count as a touch. Accordingly, that player's team still has a maximum of 3 touches to return the ball over the net to the opposing side, and in addition to this, that player who attempted to block may touch the ball once more consecutively after the block attempt.
 - e. Ball Pursuit: A player may run anywhere on or off the court to perform a touch on the ball. The only exception is the boundaries of a court different from the court being used for the game. If the ball enters the boundaries of a different court, the ball is dead. Further, players may not cross the boundaries of a different court to perform a touch on the ball. If any part of a player touches or crosses the boundaries of a different court, the rally is terminated, and the point shall be awarded to the opposing team.
 - f. If the ball contacts the net, a player may continue to play the ball off the net, as long as the ball does not contact the ground.
 - g. **Blocking:** A player may attempt to block an attack hit (also referred as a spike) at the net. A player may attempt to block on their side of the net or reach over the net onto the other side, as long as the block attempt does not interfere with the hitter (e.g., make physical contact with the hitter before the hitter has performed a touch on the ball).
3. **Out of Play:** The ball is considered to be out of play (also referred as dead) when it contacts the ground or is touched more than 3 times by a team before it goes over the net onto the opposing side. If the ball contacts the ground within the boundaries of the court, the side of the court in which the ball made contact with the ground loses the point. If the ball contacts the ground outside the boundaries of the court, the team that contacted the ball last loses the point. If any part of the ball contacts the boundary line of the court, it is considered in.
4. **Faults:** If a player faults, the rally is terminated, and the point shall be awarded to the opposing team. A fault occurs when:
- a. A player contacts the ball on the opposing side (e.g., over the net) while an opposing player attempts to hit the ball.
 - b. A player makes physical contact with an opponent while an opposing player attempts to hit the ball.
 - c. A player interferes with the opposing team's play while penetrating into the opposing side under the net.
 - d. A player touches any part of the net.
 - e. While performing a serve, crossing or touching the back boundary line of the court with any part of the server's body before making contact with the ball.



Officiating

BSL sand volleyball matches are self-officiated. All players are expected to adhere to the rules provided in this document.

Protests

Each Team Captain is allowed 1 protest per night of play. If the captain wishes to protest a play or call on the court, the game must halt, and the protest brought to a member of the Board. The captain must be able to clearly articulate the rule or call that is being protested. Judgement calls are not protestable. Whenever possible, team captains should agree to replay a point where an unclear play or call occurs.

Dispute Resolution

1. Any Player, Captain, or Team who disagrees with the interpretation, application, or enforcement of these Rules must notify the Volleyball Director within a reasonable timeframe of the event giving rise to the dispute.

1.1. On-Court Disputes

1.1.1. Any dispute regarding gameplay, rule interpretation, player conduct, scoring, or other on-court matters must be raised before the Player leaves the venue on the day of the match.

1.2. Administrative Disputes

1.2.1. Any dispute regarding standings, roster eligibility, division placement, substitutions, league administration, disciplinary actions, scheduling, or other administrative matters must be submitted to the Volleyball Director within forty-eight (48) hours following the conclusion of the match or event giving rise to the dispute.

1.3. Failure to raise a dispute within the applicable timeframe shall constitute a waiver of the right to contest the matter.

1.4. The BSL Board of Directors shall review all disputes and render a final decision. All decisions of the Board are final.



TOURNAMENT PLAY

1: Tournament Details:

1.1. Timing:

- 1.1.1. Following each regular season, and on special occasions, Born Sports League may host a special sand volleyball tournament under these guidelines.

1.2. Rules:

- 1.2.1. Tournament Matches will be scored as the best 2 out of 3 Games played.
- 1.2.2. Tournament Matches are not timed.
- 1.2.3. Tournament Games - The first two games go to 21 points. If a third game is necessary, it will be a tie breaker to 15 points. For each game, the winning team must win by 2 points (no cap).

1.3. Eligibility:

- 1.3.1. To play in the tournament, each player must qualify under these guidelines.
 - a) Play on a competing team: As a regular roster Player but not a Substitute.
 - b) Tournament Substitutions: No Substitutes are allowed during tournament play, at least 3 rostered players must be present in order to compete.

1.4. Seeding:

- 1.4.1. Tournament seeds will be based on regular season (or pool play) placings.
- 1.4.2. Seeding two-way ties are broken:
 - A. First by direct Game-to-Game record.
 - B. Total points scored.
 - C. Least points scored.
- 1.4.3. The BSL Board of Directors along with the BSL Volleyball Director reserve the right to organize the tournament into divisions at their discretion, based on the results of the regular season.

1.5. Home Team:

- 1.5.1. The higher seed team is the “Home” team and shall serve first.

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September 16, 2025 Added Section 2: Custom Team Uniforms.

September 16, 2025 Revision Notes: Section 6: Substitution Fee Updated.

September 16, 2025 Added Tournament Play Section

June 24th, 2026 Added Division Placement, Added Dispute Resolution, Revised Fundamental Rules (Matches), Revised Fundamental Rules (Player Rotation), Revised Fundamental Rules (Time Limits), Revised Tournaments Rule 1.2.3, Revised Tournaments Eligibility 1.3.1b

Sept 8, 2026 Added 4c Minimum required number of registered players. Added 6e, amount of Substitutes allowed based on number of registered players.

