

Wallyball Skill Set Descriptions for the Wallyball Information Network

Use the following definitions:

The **OPEN DIVISION** is the highest level of play. Players know and abide by all the game and ball handling rules of the sport. In OPEN play, a wallyball is often spiked in excess of 80 mph with defensive players able to "dig" balls traveling at that speed. Players generally have many years of experience playing wallyball and/or volleyball. They are an all around consistent player. Nearly all players at this level have played organized volleyball at the collegiate level or club level. They also have been acclimated to tournament play through years of tournament level competition. In addition to very strong volleyball skills, OPEN wallyball players generally have several years of wallyball experience as well. What often separates OPEN level wallyball players from ADVANCED level players with the same volleyball skill level is the amount of experience playing wallyball. Wallyball played at the OPEN level requires a unique skill set that is not entirely transferable from volleyball. OPEN (A Level) volleyball players, as a rule, DO NOT step onto a wallyball court the first several times and excel as wallyball players, but rather take months, if not years to develop into top caliber wallyball players.

The **ADVANCED Division** is one step down from the OPEN division. These players know and abide by all the game and ball handling rules of the sport. At this level, players exhibit good proficiency at bumping, setting, and spiking. Players often excel at one or even two of these skills but are not as skilled all around as the OPEN player. Normally, ADVANCED players do not have as much ball control as the OPEN players or cannot set consistently.

The **INTERMEDIATE Division** is one step down from the ADVANCED Division. Players know and abide by all of the game and most of the ball handling rules of the sport. Their skills are still developing, but they are considered a pretty good player. An INTERMEDIATE player is just learning the ball handling techniques.

The **BEGINNER Division** is one step down from the INTERMEDIATE Division. These players are learning the game rules and ball handling skills required for the game. They are on the court to have a great time and learn the game. The BEGINNER's skills are still developing, and they are mostly a social player.

Ball control is a MAJOR concern!

Let's face it. Some people should NEVER over-head set. Setting is one of the most controversial areas in wallyball and volleyball. Bad sets seem to go uncalled and it can get very frustrating.

A contact of the ball using the fingers two hands to direct the ball toward a teammate is a set. A player may set the ball in any direction toward his/her team's court. Rotation of a set ball **may** indicate a held ball or multiple contacts during the set but in itself is not a fault.

A player may have successive contacts with the ball during a single attempt to make the team's first contact, provided the fingers are not used to direct the ball.

The ball must be contacted cleanly. It cannot be held, lifted, pushed, caught, carried, or thrown. The ball cannot roll or come to rest on any part of a player's body. It can rebound in any direction.

What I normally find is that when we play against another team in our division, we generally have a very good hand setter. Unfortunately, the opposing team usually doesn't. Therefore when we perform a handset, the ball is clean, with little to no spin. However when the opposing team does a handset, it may have several rotations. We instinctively hesitate because we think the set is bad and should be called. If the set isn't called, we feel the game is not being played fairly. When things like this happen during a game, you can't help but get discouraged.

However with this being said, I still understand that a lot of people don't like tight rules when it comes to hand setting. Some say it discourages people from wanting to use their hands to set the ball. My philosophy is: PRACTICE, PRACTICE, and more PRACTICE. Just like anything else, if you want to get good at something, practice.

In my opinion, tightening up the rules on hand setting will not discourage but will encourage people to practice. Also seeing someone handset that can do it very well, encourages me more to learn how to do it and/or become better at it.

I have seen some players carry the ball down to their chest to set a ball. I have seen others throw up a handset from above their heads so quickly that it makes your head spin. A handset is done at or above the top of your nose with the ball traveling in one direction only during the setting motion. Usually when the ball is "pushed" wrong from before it leaves the hands, it will have spin on it. This should automatically be a bad set and be called as such. In certain cases, the division you play in determines which rules will apply. For example, if the ball leaves your hands cleanly but has rotation on it while in the air, your division level should determine if this will be called a bad set or not. See below for the rules for the different divisions.

Open division: Two or less rotations. Anything more than that should be called.

Advanced Division: no more than three rotations

Intermediate Division: Don't worry about rotation. Call a set that is spinning fast.

Lets put more skill into the setting position...make the setter get his/her feet in the right position and deliver a good set!

Legal contact of the ball, particularly during a handset, is probably the most difficult part of the game to self-officiate. The ball must be contacted cleanly (one contact on the second and third hit) and not held, lifted, pushed, caught, carried or thrown. The ball cannot roll or come to rest on any part of a player's body. Rotation of a set ball may indicate a held ball or multiple contacts during the set, but in itself is not a fault. Since wallyball has different categories of skill, there are differences in how strictly this rule is applied. The stricter you are with your team, the more likely the team's skill will improve. If a captain feels that another team is constantly setting the ball illegally and not calling it, it is better for the captain to point out the fault early in the game and not wait until the score is 14-14.

In volleyball, it's worth noting that the AVP has followed the trend of the FIVB and USAV in loosening up on hand setting calls. The purpose of this change is to encourage longer rallies, and decrease the number of rallies decided by the officials.

Wallyball hasn't done this. In either sport, we strongly encourage you to call your own mishandled sets! The benefits are improved skills and cleaner games.