

Vivek Solanki



# **VOLLEYBALL**

## **Skills & Rules**

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball is an Olympic team sport in which two teams of 6 players are separated by a net. Each team tries to score points by grounding a ball on the other team's court under organized rules. This article focuses on competitive indoor volleyball; numerous other variations of volleyball have developed, most notably the Olympic spin-off sport beach volleyball.

The complete rules are extensive. But simply, play proceeds as follows: A player on one of the teams begins a rally by serving the ball (tossing or releasing it and



then hitting it with a hand or arm), from behind the back boundary line of the court, over the net, and into the receiving team's court. The receiving team must not let the ball be grounded within their court. They may touch the ball as many as three times. Typically, the first two touches to set up for an attack, an attempt to direct the ball back over the net in such a way that the serving team is unable to prevent it from being grounded in their court.

The rally continues, with each team allowed as many as three consecutive touches, until either (1): a team makes a kill, grounding the ball on the opponent's court and winning the rally; or (2): a team commits a fault and loses the rally. The team that wins the rally is awarded a point, and serves the ball to start the next rally. A few of the most common faults include:

- causing the ball to touch the ground outside the opponents' court or without first passing over the net;
- catching and throwing the ball;
- double hit: two consecutive contacts with the ball made by the same player;
- four consecutive contacts with the ball made by the same team.

The ball is usually played with the hands or arms, but players can legally strike or push (short contact) the ball with any part of the body.

A number of consistent techniques have evolved in volleyball, including spiking and blocking (because these plays are made above the top of the net the vertical jump is an athletic skill emphasized in the sport) as well

as passing, setting, and specialized player positions and offensive and defensive structures.

## **ORIGIN OF VOLLEYBALL**

On February 9, 1895, in Holyoke, Massachusetts (USA), William G Morgan, a YMCA physical education director, created a new game called Mintonette as a pastime to be played preferably indoors and by any number of players. The game took some of its characteristics from tennis and handball. Another indoor sport, basketball, was catching on in the area, having been invented just ten miles (sixteen kilometers) away in the city of Springfield, Massachusetts, only four years before. Mintonette was designed to be an indoor sport less rough than basketball for older members of the YMCA, while still requiring a bit of athletic effort.



The first rules, written down by William G Morgan, called for a net 6 ft 6 in (1.98 m) high, a 25×50 ft (7.6×15.2 m) court, and any number of players. A match was composed of nine innings with three serves for each team in each inning, and no limit to the number of ball contacts for each team before sending the ball to the opponents' court. In case of a serving error, a second try was allowed. Hitting the ball into the net was considered a foul (with loss of the point or a side-out)—except in the case of the first-try serve.

After an observer, Alfred Halstead, noticed the volleying nature of the game at its first exhibition match in 1896, played at the International YMCA Training School (now called Springfield College), the game quickly became known as volleyball (it was originally spelled as two words: "volley ball"). Volleyball rules were slightly modified by the International YMCA Training School and the game spread around the country to various YMCAs.

## **REFINEMENTS AND LATER DEVELOPMENTS**

The first official ball used in volleyball is disputed; some sources say that Spalding created the first official ball in 1896, while others claim it was created in 1900. The rules have evolved over time; In Philippines by 1916, the skill and power of the set and spike had been introduced, and four years later a "three hits" rule and a rule against hitting from the back row were established. In 1917, the game was changed from 21 to 15 points. In 1919, about 16,000 volleyballs were distributed by the American Expeditionary Forces to their troops and allies, which sparked the growth of volleyball in new countries.

The first country outside the United States to adopt volleyball was Canada in 1900. An international federation, the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), was founded in 1947, and the first World Championships were held in 1949 for men and 1952 for women. The sport is now popular in Brazil, in Europe (where especially Italy, the Netherlands, and countries from Eastern Europe have been major forces since the late 1980s), in Russia, and in other countries including China and the rest of Asia, as well in as the United States.

Beach volleyball, a variation of the game played on sand and with only two players per team, became a FIVB-endorsed variation in 1987 and was added to the Olympic program at the 1996 Summer Olympics. Volleyball is also a sport at the Paralympics managed by the World Organisation Volleyball for Disabled.

## **VOLLEYBALL IN THE OLYMPICS**

The history of Olympic volleyball traces back to the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, where volleyball was played as part of an American sports demonstration event. After the foundation of FIVB and some continental confederations, it began to be considered for official inclusion. In 1957, a special tournament was held at the 53rd IOC session in Sofia, Bulgaria to support such request. The competition was a success, and the sport was officially included in the program for the 1964 Summer Olympics.

The Olympic volleyball tournament was originally a simple competition, whose format paralleled the one still employed in the World Cup: all teams played against each other team and then were ranked by wins, set average, and point average. One disadvantage of this



round-robin system is that medal winners could be determined before the end of the games, making the audience lose interest in the outcome of the remaining matches. To cope with this situation, the competition was split into two phases with the addition of a "final round" elimination tournament consisting of quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals matches in 1972. The number of teams involved in the Olympic tournament has grown steadily since 1964. Since 1996, both men's and women's events count twelve participant nations. Each of the five continental volleyball confederations has at least one affiliated national federation involved in the Olympic Games.

The U.S.S.R. won men's gold in both 1964 and 1968. After taking bronze in 1964 and silver in 1968, Japan

finally won the gold for men's volleyball in 1972. Women's gold went to Japan in 1964 and again in 1976. That year, the introduction of a new offensive skill, the backrow attack, allowed Poland to win the men's competition over the Soviets in a very tight five-set match. Since the strongest teams in men's volleyball at the time belonged to the Eastern Bloc, the American-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics did not have as great an effect on these events as it had on the women's. The U.S.S.R. collected their third Olympic Gold Medal in men's volleyball with a 3-1 victory over Bulgaria (the Soviet women won that year as well, their third gold as well). With the U.S.S.R. boycotting the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, the U.S. was able to sweep Brazil in the finals to win the men's gold medal. Italy won its first medal (bronze in the men's competition) in 1984, foreshadowing a rise in prominence for their volleyball teams.

At the 1988 Games, Karch Kiraly and Steve Timmons led the U.S. men's team to a second straight gold medal. In 1992, underrated Brazil upset favourites C.I.S., Netherlands, and Italy in the men's competition for the country's first Olympic gold medal. Runner-up Netherlands, men's silver medalist in 1992, came back under team leaders Ron Zwerver and Olof van der Meulen in the 1996 Games for a five-set win over Italy. A men's bronze medalist in 1996, Serbia and Montenegro (playing in 1996 and 2000 as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) beat Russia in the gold medal match in 2000, winning their first gold medal ever. In 2004, Brazil won its second men's volleyball gold medal beating Italy in the finals. In the 2008 Games, the USA beat Brazil in the men's volleyball final.

Volleyball is played in more than sixty countries and by more than sixty million people. In countries in Eastern Europe, Asia and South America top games draw crowds the size of which rival those at soccer matches. At world championship matches it's not unusual to see ticket touts doing business on a scale that we in England would see only at the F.A. Cup Final. As a recreational team sport volleyball ranks as about the third most popular in the world and is considered as a top level competitive sport in more than twenty countries.

The game of volleyball was invented in 1895 by William Morgan, who worked for the Y.M.C.A. in Holyoak, Massachusetts. He was concerned with providing exercise for large groups of business men, and his earliest form of the game was designed to provide mild exercise for people of this kind. This original game was very simple—any number of players batted a basketball bladder backwards and forwards over a tennis net which was fixed at a height of six feet.

Since then the game has developed and spread world wide. It's early progress outside America is generally accepted to have followed the armed forces and the spread of the Y.M.C.A. movement. It's fantastic increase in popularity can be explained by a host of reasons: it is basically a very simple game. It can be played indoors and outdoors, and is therefore suitable for varying seasons and any climate. The playing area required takes up comparatively little space so that play can take place in a gym, a sports hall, the park, the beach and even some more unlikely places like hangar decks of aircraft carriers, and it can be played by players of both sexes and over a considerable age range. The equipment required is simple and still relatively inexpensive. Play



can be of tremendously varying standards, formal purely recreative level on the beach and in the park, through all levels of clubs and school competitions, right up to the supremely demanding and fiercely competitive play at international level.

The first attempts to organise the game internationally were made by representatives of twenty-two interested countries at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. Ten years later the Federation International de Volleyball was set up, with its headquarters in Paris, to administer and control volleyball throughout the world. The first world championships were organised in Prague in 1949. There are also various zonal championships, such as the European Championships. In 1964 volleyball became an Olympic sport for the first time when the Olympic Games were held in Tokyo.

The modern game is dominated at international level by national teams from Japan and Eastern Europe. The society in which their players live make it possible for them to train and prepare for many hours every week, and the money available there from the paying public and from the governments make sure that training is not at the players expense. The sports schools and other facilities for coaches and trainers ensure that the technical expertise necessary to train players, is also available. The money and status available to coaches makes sure that there is no shortage of them. It seems unlikely that similar opportunities will be available in most of the western world. Neither does the culture encourage western players to train so hard and for so long. Therefore the Japanese and East European dominance is likely to continue.