



DC PRIDE VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Rules of League Play

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ARTICLE I: GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. **Purpose.** The enjoyment of the sport of volleyball in a safe environment for all participants should be the goal and intent for all league play regulations.
- B. **Jurisdiction.** Although DC Pride Volleyball League play generally follows USA Volleyball rules, amendments or exemptions contained in these guidelines are applicable to all league sanctioned competition.

ARTICLE II: RULES OF THE SPORT

- A. **DC Pride Volleyball League sanctioned play follows these rules:**
 - 1. **Generally.** All DC Pride Volleyball League sanctioned play follows USAV rules, except as otherwise specified.
 - 2. **Service.** Only one toss or release of the ball for service allowing eight (8) seconds to complete the service. A player is allowed one step into the court to complete the service motion where free zone space is limited and/or where the court must be shortened for space.
 - 3. **Contact with net.** A player is not permitted to make any contact with the net or any contact with the antenna above the plane of the net while playing or attempting to play the ball; such a contact is considered interference and a fault. Incidental contact away from the play is not considered a net violation as determined by a judgment call of the referee.
 - a. If a player, not playing the ball makes contact with the net that affects the height of the net, interference of play can be assessed.
 - 4. **Contact with opponent's court.** A player is permitted to penetrate under the net into the opponent's court with any part of the body above the feet, provided it does not interfere with the opponent's play. Therefore, a center line fault is called when either (1) a player's foot completely penetrates into the opponent's court past the center line or (2) a player interferes with opponent's play while penetrating into the opponent's court.
 - 5. **Ball contact with gym ceiling and walls.**
 - a. A team may play the ball off the ceiling within its own court only. If ball breaks the plane of the net after hitting ceiling, it's considered "out" off last contact.
 - b. Ball contact with hanging backboards can be considered interference within Referee discretion and may be played over.
 - c. Ball contact with hanging sideboards and walls are considered "out" off last contact. If the trajectory of the ball would cause it to continue out of play, no matter the



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surface of interference, based on the judgment of the referee, the ball will be considered “out”.

6. **Contact with an adjacent court.** A player is not permitted to make contact with an adjacent court either before, during or after contacting the ball. If a player should contact an adjacent court, then the play should be whistled dead with the referee signaling the ball is out.
7. **Interference from an adjacent court ball.** If a ball from an adjacent court enters the playing court during a play, the up ref shall whistle the play dead and signal for a replay. The up ref or line judges may signal the entry of the ball on the court.

B. Rules for league play.

1. Competing teams requirements.

- a. Each team must have at least five (5) players present at the sound of the opening whistle to play.
 - i. In the case where a team plays with only five players, they shall play with a ghost player in the rotation. When the ghost player rotates to the serving position the team will automatically lose that point and the serve will move to the opposing team.
 - ii. In the case a team elects to utilize a ghost player because a substitution is neither allowed nor available, the team captain of the opposing team will be notified. The captain of the opposing team may then agree to suspend this rule, eliminating the point penalty due to the missing server, for the entire match. If this point penalty has been removed, the team at fault will play with three players in the front row, and two players in the back row. The rear right spot on the team at fault’s court will be considered a vacant spot that will not be rotated into.
- b. Failure by the teams scheduled to play to comply with the five-player requirement for scheduled match will result in an automatic forfeit of the first set at five minutes past the scheduled match start time. Failure by the team to provide at least five (5) players fifteen minutes after the scheduled match start time will result in an automatic forfeit of the match.
- c. Teams are allowed up to two (2) substitute players from another team within their division or from a lower division in order to have at least five (5) players.

2. Injury.

- a. Any injury after play has started cannot force forfeiture unless a team would then have fewer than five (5) players.
- b. Under no circumstances will a team be allowed to play with fewer than five (5) players.



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3. Timed games.

a. Game clock.

- i. The board member on duty or designee will set, control and observe game clock during timed games.
- ii. Clock stops at the discretion of the board member on duty. The game clock will only be altered if the start of play is impeded by an activity in which neither playing team was at fault.
- iii. In the event of an injury where a player needs medical attention, if an injured player feels that he/she will exacerbate the injury by moving off the court, the player should not be moved until medical attention arrives. An injured player may be moved off the court at any time when he/she consents to be moved or if the injury does not affect the player's mobility
- iv. Matches are 55 minutes consisting of a five-minute warm-up and 50 minutes for match play. A three-minute warning will be given at minute forty-seven of match play.
- v. Match play cannot extend into the time of the next scheduled match unless necessary to break a tie.

b. Timeouts.

- i. Only the team captain may signal the referee for a timeout.
- ii. Each team is allowed one 30-second timeout during each set.
- iii. No timeouts are allowed after notification of the three-minute warning.

c. Officiating.

- i. Referee responsibilities
 1. Each team will be responsible for supplying one up referee, one down referee, two line judges and one scorekeeper for all assigned matches. Referees should be at the assigned gym ten (10) minutes before their scheduled match to secure game ball and necessary materials (whistles, stopwatch, red/yellow cards), unless playing in the match immediately preceding their assigned match.
 2. Referees are expected to be familiar with these Rules of League Play and the DC Pride Volleyball League Sportsmanship and Anti-Violence Policy.
 3. Referees must have attended the DCPVL referee clinic at the beginning of the season, or be NAGVA or USAV R1/up-referee certified.
 4. Referees should call team captains five (5) minutes before play to determine serve and side.



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5. Referees should notify the DC Pride Volleyball League Board member on duty in instances forcing a game forfeiture and ensure appropriate scoring of forfeited games. Referees should also promptly notify a DC Pride Volleyball League Board member on duty in the event of a violation of DC Pride Volleyball League's sportsmanship policy or an act of violence.
6. Jewelry, hats, and other equipment are prohibited. Piercings that cannot be removed must be covered with athletic tape.
7. Players must be wearing athletic shoes with non-marking soles. Players will no longer be allowed to wear toe shoes.
8. The referee will fill out a League-approved score sheet.
 - a. At the beginning of the match the referee should confirm the correct teams are playing
 - b. At the end of the match the referee should:
 - i. Confirm the final score and winner of each set.
 - ii. Obtain the initials of both team captains in the scoring section.
 - iii. Select each team's MVP as described under Article IV-J.
 - iv. Report any incidents of misconduct as described Article II-B.3.d.i and/or the League Sportsmanship and Anti-Violence Policy to the Board Member on Duty. The nature and circumstances behind any protest of a set or match by any team should be addressed at the time of the protest.
9. Officiating team members are expected to be considerate and to stay focused on officiating the game and can be replaced at the request of the referee. The Board member on duty may issue the officiating team a forfeit of the first set of their next scheduled match in instances of extreme inappropriate or non-attentive conduct during officiating duties.
 - a. In the event of such a forfeit, the team must still continue to perform its other assigned officiating duties. Failure to do so shall be considered a Sportsmanship Violation and subject to the review of the Commissioner and the Grievance Committee, if appropriate.
10. A team scheduled to officiate the first scheduled match must also perform opening duties and must have all equipment in place five (5) minutes before the scheduled match. If the team fails to do so, and the failure to set up equipment results in a delay of the first match, the team assigned to perform officiating duties for the first match may be issued a forfeit of the first set of their next scheduled match. In the event of such a forfeit, the team must still continue to perform its other assigned officiating duties.



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Failure to do so shall be considered bad sportsmanship and subject to the review of the Commissioner and the Grievance Committee, if appropriate.

11. A team scheduled to officiate the last scheduled match must also perform closing duties, which include the take down and appropriate storage of all equipment (including all balls, scoreboard, and official stand).
 12. If a team repeatedly fails to comply with these regulations, it shall be considered bad sportsmanship and subject to the review of the Commissioner and the Grievance Committee, if appropriate.
- ii. Sequence of referee signals
1. After a referee blows the whistle to end a rally, the referee will indicate the following with hand signals:
 - a. The team that will serve next; then
 - b. The nature of the fault that ended the rally; then
 - c. The player at fault, if necessary.
- d. **Conduct of the game.**
- i. **Misconduct.**
 1. **Minor misconduct.** Minor misconduct offenses are not subject to sanctions. It is the 1st referee's duty to prevent the teams from approaching the sanctioning level. This is done in two stages:
 - a. Stage 1: By issuing a verbal warning through the game captain;
 - b. Stage 2: By use of a YELLOW CARD to the team member(s) concerned. This formal warning is not in itself a sanction but a symbol that the team member (and by extension the team) has reached the sanctioning level for the match. It is recorded in the score sheet but has no immediate consequences. Note: Yellow card warnings are assessed to individuals, but are enforced for the entire team. This means that each team may only receive one yellow card per match.
 2. **Misconduct leading to sanctions.** Incorrect conduct by a team member toward officials, opponent teammates or spectators is classified in three categories according to the seriousness of the offense.
 - a. Rude conduct: action contrary to good manners or moral principles.
 - b. Offensive conduct: defamatory or insulting words or gestures or any action expressing contempt.
 - c. Aggression: actual physical attack or aggressive or threatening behavior.



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3. **Sanction scale.** According to the judgment of the 1st referee and depending on the seriousness of the offense, the sanctions to be applied and recorded on the score sheet are: Penalty, Expulsion or Disqualification.
 - a. Penalty
 - i. The first rude conduct in the match by any team member is penalized with a point and service to the opponent.
 - b. Expulsion
 - i. A team member who is sanctioned by expulsion shall not play for the rest of the set, must be substituted legally and immediately if on court and must remain seated on the sidelines with no other consequences.
 - ii. The first offensive conduct by a team member is sanctioned by expulsion with no other consequences.
 - iii. The second rude conduct in the same match by the same team member is sanctioned by expulsion with no other consequences.
 - c. Disqualification
 - i. A team member who is sanctioned by disqualification must be substituted legally and immediately if on court and must leave the Competition-Control Area for the rest of the match with no other consequences.
 - ii. The first physical attack or implied or threatened aggression is sanctioned by disqualification with no other consequences.
 - iii. The second offensive conduct in the same match by the same team member is sanctioned by disqualification with no other consequences.
 - iv. The third rude conduct in the same match by the same team member is sanctioned by disqualification with no other consequences.
4. **Application of misconduct sanctions.**
 - a. All misconduct sanctions are individual sanctions, remain in force for the entire match and are recorded on the score sheet.
 - b. The repetition of misconduct by the same team member in the same match is sanctioned progressively (the team member receives a heavier sanction for each successive offense).
 - c. Expulsion or disqualification due to offensive conduct or aggression does not require a previous sanction.



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5. **Summary of misconduct and cards used.**
 - a. Warning: no sanction
 - i. Stage 1: Verbal warning
 - ii. Stage 2: Yellow card
 - b. Penalty: sanction
 - i. Red card
 - c. Expulsion: sanction
 - i. Red + Yellow cards jointly
 - d. Disqualification: sanction
 - i. Red + Yellow card separately
- ii. **Protests.**
 1. Only the team captain is permitted to address the referee if there is a protest of play. The team captain should approach the referee after the play is blown dead, not before. The team captain should address the referee with respect and with appropriate behavior. The referee should address the concern with respect and with appropriate behavior.
 2. A team captain may file a protest at the point that he/she feels the interpretation of the rule of play from the referee is not satisfactory. The team captain shall declare the official protest to the referee, who will halt play and summon the Board member on duty to immediately resolve the protest. As a reminder judgment calls are not subject to protest.
- iii. **Applicability of the harassment and non-discrimination policy.**
 1. The Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy found in Article X of the Bylaws applies to in-game conduct. However, misconduct under the Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy must be raised and resolved outside of a match. If a player does feel that a violation of this policy is occurring during a match, they should alert their Team Captain, who can seek immediate relief from the referee, and/or other players in the hopes of building a body of evidence to support their claim.

ARTICLE III: PARTICIPANTS

A. **Team members.**

1. All participants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age and sign a Member Liability Waiver Form accepting complete responsibility for their own physical conditioning and



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preparedness to participate in sport competition and waive any liability whatever, resulting from, or in any manner arising out of participation in league sanctioned play.

2. All other rules and regulations on team membership can be found under Article II Section 10 of the DCPVL Bylaws.

B. **Team captains.**

1. Choosing team members

- a. Each team captain is required to select seven (7) team members in addition to themselves (for a total of 8 players per team) at the beginning of each season.
- b. Once a player has been drafted, that member is not eligible to play on any other team or any other division during that season.
- c. A team that plays league-sanctioned games with a player not chosen as stipulated in these guidelines will forfeit any and all games played during the violation. Violations are subject to review and further sanction by the Board of Directors or Grievance Committee.

C. **Filling a vacancy.**

1. A Vacancy is created when a team member becomes inactive, resigns, becomes injured, or is in default/bad standing for more than two consecutive matches and the team captain deems the position vacant.
2. The Division Representative will monitor the filling of vacancies within the Division.
3. A team captain may choose to fill a vacancy whenever their team has fewer than the total number of members selected by the team captain during the draft plus the team captain.
4. A team captain must fill vacancies if the team has fewer than six (6) team members including them.
5. The team captain filling a vacancy may choose any player(s) not currently playing in the League by following these procedures:
 - a. Team captain should contact the Division Representative with the request, including name and contact information of the player
 - b. Division Representative will contact the prospective player to conduct an initial skills exhibition.
 - c. Dues structure will be pro-rated based on time of entry in the season.
 - d. Dues must be paid in full prior to the first match in which the member plays.
 - e. No team can pick a player after the 5th week of play unless they have fewer than five (5) players left due to injury or an inactive player whose spot on the team has been declared a vacancy.



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- f. Only the team captain can make a request to fill a vacancy
 6. If the vacancy created is the captain position, the remaining team members must vote and elect a new team captain, and the new team captain may select a player to fill the vacancy pursuant to these Rules.
- D. Collection & distribution of materials.**
1. Each team captain will be responsible for the distribution of league materials, a copy of the DC Pride Volleyball League By-Laws, a copy of the RULES OF LEAGUE PLAY Policies and Procedures Manual, a copy of the Sportsmanship and Anti-Violence Policy, a copy of the season schedule, and Season League Shirt and Team Jersey to each of the members of their team. A team captain can fulfill this responsibility by informing their teammates of the location of these documents on the DC Pride Volleyball League website.
 2. No one will be allowed to play without a completed and signed Member Liability Waiver Form or acknowledging the online equivalent thereof.
- E. Team administration.**
1. Team captains shall encourage team members to review postings for information related to league and division issues and sign up for the DC Pride Volleyball League announcements e-mail distribution list.
 2. Team captains must communicate to their teams the DC Pride Volleyball League announcements and directives as instructed by the Division Representative.
 3. Captains are responsible for their team's observance of all rules and regulations during league sanctioned team competition and officiating team assignments. Captains will also accept any penalties or sanctions imposed on the team as a result of any misconduct or violation by their team's member(s) including forfeiture of game(s) and match(es).
 4. Captain should appoint another team member as an alternate captain should the team captain not be able to attend a regularly scheduled event.
 5. Team captains may also perform related tasks to enhance the Division's operation and administration and report all team member issues, concerns, and/or feedback to the Division Representative so that the Representative may report the issues, concerns, and/or feedback, if appropriate, to the Board of Directors.
 6. Team captains should organize at least two social visits to patronize their team sponsor. Captains should notify their Division Representative with details (date, time) and whether the social is open to other teams. If the social is open to other teams, the Division Representative will ensure that the event is added to the DCPVL Calendar and included in the weekly League round-up email.
 7. Captains shall have discretion to sanction their team members for absences or misconduct associated with DCPVL activities.
 - a. Such sanctions may include, but are not limited to:



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- i. Benching a player for some or all of a set or match;
 - ii. Seeking the change of a player's status from active to inactive; and
 - iii. Referring the player to the Grievance Committee.
 - b. During a match, a Captain shall have the power to immediately sanction a team member who started the match in good standing, and then provide a written explanation to the sanctioned player and make the appropriate Division Representative aware within 24-hours.
 - c. However, if the Captain feels the need to sanction a player in a period between weeks of competition, either for problematic in-match conduct or for poor conduct at a DCPVL-related event, the Captain has 24-hours from the incident to, in writing, apply and explain the sanction to the player and notify the Division Representative, unless otherwise specified.
 - d. If an imposed sanction is to limit a player's participation in a subsequent week or weeks of play, then that player must be given at least 48-hours of advanced, written notification. However, if the problematic conduct occurs within the 48-hour window before a match begins, then the player must be informed within 24-hours immediately following the end of league play for that week.
8. Players are able to appeal a captain's sanctions to the Grievance Committee if the sanction does not already involve the Grievance Committee.

ARTICLE IV: RULES OF COMPETITION

A. Divisions.

1. The sanctioning of all teams comprising each Division and the number of teams assigned to each Division will be determined and published by the Board after the completion of the pre-season evaluation.
2. League competition will be conducted between teams within a Division.
3. Team captains within the Division will determine the members of the team based on the pre-season draft.

B. Skills Exhibition

1. The Board will administer Skills Exhibition session(s) at the beginning of each season.
2. The Skills Development Director will facilitate the Skills Exhibition
3. All players wishing to demonstrate their skills before captains and/or their drafting proxies are welcome to participate in the Skills Exhibition.
4. Numbers will be used to identify players and a list of registered players will be provided to captains in attendance. It is encouraged that captains be in attendance. Captains can use



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the rosters to record their evaluations of players. These evaluations can then be used during the drafting process.

C. **Player draft.**

1. **Determining divisional rosters.** The goal of the league is to provide fair and balanced competition for all players. Prior to the draft selection, the Board will construct divisional rosters based on the divisional preferences of each player, which will be indicated during registration.
2. **Order of draft.** The Advanced Division captains will draft first. Then those players who choose to be eligible for either division, who are not drafted into the Advanced Division, will be placed in the draft for the Intermediate Division, and so on. At the conclusion of the draft, any players not chosen for a team will be issued a full refund and placed on the supplemental draft list.
3. **Snake draft.** The Snake Draft gets its name from the way the draft process moves along. To determine first round order, numbers will be drawn out of a hat. Below is an example using an 8-team per division format:

8 Team division

Round 1 (picks 1-8): captain 1 to captain 8

Round 2 (picks 9-16): captain 8 back to captain 1

Round 3 (picks 17-24): captain 1 to captain 8

Round 4 (picks 25-32): captain 8 back to captain 1

Round 5 (picks 33-40): captain 1 to captain 8

Round 6 (picks 41-48): captain 8 back to captain 1

Round 7 (picks 49-56): captain 1 to captain 8

Round 8 (picks 57-64): captain 8 back to captain 1

4. **Time allotment.** Each team captain shall generally have two minutes to make their draft pick in each round.
5. **Rules of the road.** Passing (opting not to draft a round) is not allowed. This is to ensure that after each round, all teams have the same amount of players on their roster. There will be no trading allowed during the draft selection. After the draft is complete, captains will have 15 minutes to “trade” players should they choose to do so. This is not required, nor mandatory. It is left to the discretion of the captains. Once the 15 minutes are up, there is no trading allowed. Drafts are final. Only Captains, or their designee, and Board Members will be present for the draft.
6. **Supplemental draft.** After Week 3, a supplemental draft may be held for those captains/teams that may lose a player or two during the first three weeks. A captain/team is not required to pick up a player(s) during the supplemental draft. The supplemental drafting order is determined by wins/losses record during the first three weeks. The team



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ranked first will draft last and the team ranked last will draft first. There will be no trading allowed during or after the supplemental draft. All supplemental draft selections are final.

D. **Seasons.**

1. The Board will determine and publish the number and name of each sanctioned competitive season.
2. The DC Pride Volleyball League season will provide all Divisions with scheduled matches that, to the best of the League's ability, respect the observance of major calendar holidays.
3. The number of matches, the schedule of team competition and officiating team assignments for the season will be determined and published by the Board by the date of the Skills Exhibition Session(s).

E. **Matches.**

1. Matches shall consist of three sets, with a five-minute warm-up period and up to a two-minute break between sets.
2. The scheduled start time for each match is the time when the referee should begin the above-mentioned five-minute warm up period.
3. The team that wins two of the three sets will be awarded the match.

F. **Sets.**

1. Each set during the regular season shall start at a score of 4-4 and play to 25, rally point scoring period, win by 2, and cap at 27. If the time limit is reached for a scheduled match, the team with the most points at that moment (regardless of the 2-point win requirement) is awarded the match. If the score is a tie, one final point is played. See below for scoring of playoff matches.

G. **Scoring.**

1. Scoring system
 - a. Scoring system will be rally scoring.
2. Scoring sanctioned games
 - a. Points will be awarded by the referee.
 - b. Scoreboard will reflect status of score during the games.
 - c. Final score of games will be recorded in score sheet by the referee.
 - d. Team captains (from both teams) and the referee for the match must initial score sheet at end of match to verify recorded scores.



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- e. Failure to initial score sheet may prevent addressing disputes or correction of scores and scores as recorded on score sheet will be recorded in the Division standings as written.
3. Scoring forfeited games
 - a. A forfeited game will still be played and the score of the game will be kept unless one of the teams has less than five (5) team members present to play.
 - b. If a forfeited game is not played at all, the score will be recorded in the standings as a final score of 6-1, with the forfeiting team losing.
 - c. If the forfeited game is played, in whole or in part, the score will be recorded in the standings with a final score of 6-1, with the forfeiting team losing, or the actual game score, whichever is least favorable to the forfeiting team. Under no circumstances may the forfeited team be credited with anything more favorable than a 5-point game loss.
 - d. Double forfeit games will be recorded in the standings as 1-1, regardless of the actual score, and both teams will be recorded in the standings as having lost the game. If an entire match is double forfeited, then both teams will receive a match loss.
 - e. If a single game is double forfeited, and the teams split the remaining two (2) games of the match, the match will be awarded based on the point differential of the two non-forfeited games. If the teams have no point differential, the Board shall determine how to record the match of the standings by the beginning of the next scheduled match. The Board may, but is not required to, count that match in the standings as a tie.
- H. **Season standings and statistics.**
1. All teams will be identified within a Division by a series of numbers starting with 1.
 2. The team standings for each division will be determined by order of (1) sets won-lost record, (2) points differential earned (3) coin toss.
 3. Current season standings shall be posted online after each week of play.
- I. **Season playoffs.**
1. At the end of the regular season, all teams will be seeded into a single elimination bracket.
 2. No substitute players will be allowed during the playoffs unless in the case of a team member's injury.
 3. Playoff matches are best of 3 sets with first 2 sets starting at 0-0, play to 25, rally score, win by 2, and a cap at 27. The third and deciding set starts at 0-0, play to 15, rally score, switch sides at 8, win by 2, no cap.
- J. **Team MVPs.**



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1. After each match (regular season and playoffs), the refing team must select a player from each team as MVP
2. MVP's will be selected based on the following criteria:
 - a. The player who exemplified sportsmanship and the spirit of the sport, upheld the league mission, and embodied league values
 - b. The player who stood out as an exceptional player on the court
3. Once all regular season games and playoff games are completed, the MVP votes will be tallied. The top three players from each division with the most votes will be reported to the Board. The Board will vote on the final awardee for the season, based on their knowledge of the player and the criteria set above.

ARTICLE V: DISTRIBUTION AND COMPLIANCE

- A. The DC Pride Volleyball League Board of Directors shall coordinate the distribution of the complete Rules of League Play manual to all participants. This requirement may be satisfied by posting these policies on the DC Pride Volleyball League website and informing participants of how to find them.
- B. All participants must sign a Member Liability Waiver Form accepting the terms and conditions contained in, and adherence to all guidelines stated in this Rules of League Play manual before engaging in any sanctioned league play. This requirement may be satisfied by completing an online Member Liability Waiver Form during online registration
- C. The DC Pride Volleyball League Grievance Committee may conduct a special meeting to address league policy violations and issue determinations, including the disqualification of a member for actions that violate the policies established in these guidelines (See Article XI of the DCPVL Bylaws for more details on the grievance process).