



September 16, 2026

NFHS Volleyball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Exceptional Substitutions

Exceptional substitutions are allowed for an injured or ill player when teams have exhausted their 18 team substitutions or when no legal substitutes are available. An injured or ill player who has been replaced by an exceptional substitution may not re-enter the set. (10-3-6, 10-3-6 NOTE)

SITUATION 1: Team A has exhausted its 18 team substitutions, and its middle blocker is injured and cannot continue to play. On Team A's bench are two teammates who have not played in the set, a libero replacement, and two other teammates that have already entered the set. The coach for Team A selects one of the two teammates who have not yet entered the set. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

COMMENT: Because there is at least one teammate who has not entered the set, the coach must choose one to serve as the exceptional substitution.

(10-3-6a)



SITUATION 2: Every player on Team A's roster has entered the set as either a substitute or a libero replacement. Team A's Left Front is injured and cannot continue to play. Team A's coach selects one of the teammates that has already played in the set to substitute for the injured player. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** When there are no available teammates who have not played in the set, the coach must choose one of the teammates who have entered, not as the libero replacement. The substitution will count as one of the allowable 18 team substitutions. (10-3-6b, 10-3-6 NOTE)

SITUATION 3: Team A is playing with seven players (six position players and one libero) when Team A's Right Front is injured and cannot continue to play. Team A completes a libero replacement, and the libero runs to the locker room to change into a team jersey. When the libero returns as a position player, a substitution is completed with the injured player, and the team continues to play with six players. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

COMMENT: When there are no legal substitutes available, a libero may be used as an exceptional substitution. The substitution will count as one of the allowable 18 team substitutions. (6-4-2c, 10-3-6c)



SITUATION 4: Team A is playing with eight players (six position players and two liberos) when Team A's Right Front is injured and cannot continue to play. The libero on the bench runs to the locker room to change into a team jersey. When the libero returns as a position player, a substitution is completed with the injured player, and the team continues to play with one available libero. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** When there are no legal substitutes available, a libero may be used as an exceptional substitution. When two liberos are designated and one is used as an exceptional substitution, play will continue with one libero. The substitution will count as one of the allowable 18 team substitutions. (6-4-2c, 10-3-6c)

SITUATION 5: Team A has exhausted its 18 team substitutions, and its middle blocker is injured and cannot continue to play. On Team A's bench are two teammates that have already entered the set, a libero replacement, and a second designated libero who has also played in the set. The libero on the bench runs to the locker room to change into a team jersey. When the libero returns as a position player, a substitution is completed with the injured player, and the team continues to play with one available libero. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** When there are non-libero teammates on the bench who are not currently replacing the libero on the court, they must be used as the exceptional substitution. (6-4-2c, 10-3-6c)