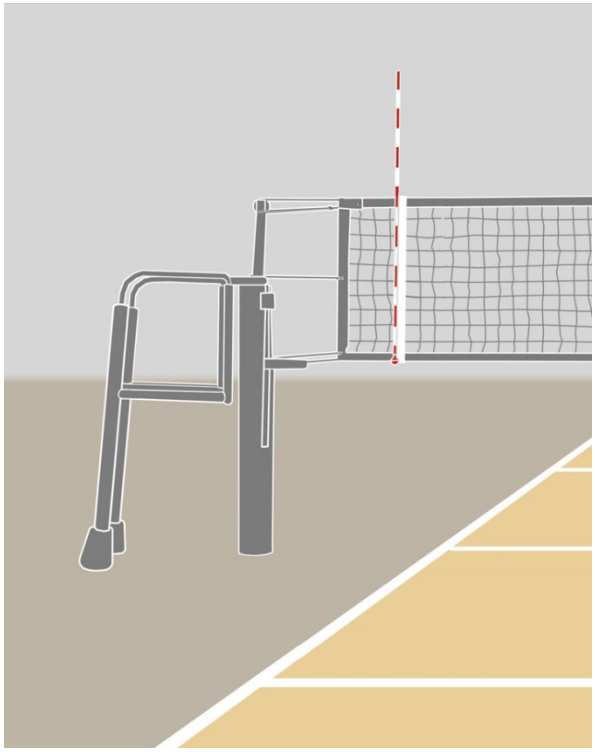
October 7, 2026

# NFHS Volleyball Weekly Rule Interpretations

## Referee's Platform Safety

### Rules References: 3-1-3, 3-1-3 PENALTY

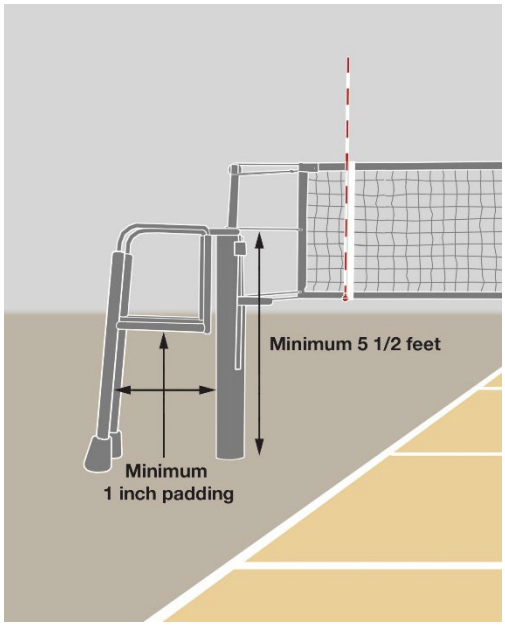
**Point of Emphasis:** Often overlooked, referee platforms can be incredibly dangerous if they are old, broken, improperly set up, etc. It is critically important that these platforms are safe and secure and provide the correct line of sight for our referees to confidently climb the ladder, stand on the platform and officiate without fear of injury.



- Hosts must provide a safe, stable platform.
- The first referee (R1) should carefully examine the stand prior to the match.
- When evaluating the referee stand, ensure that the platform is properly secured and supported.
- If the stand is designed to attach to the standard, make sure the device is clamped tightly.
- If the stand is unattached, ensure it is placed as close to the standard as possible.
- Never step onto a platform where the platform is simply touching the top ladder rung.
- Referees should not use ladders, chairs, boxes, trash cans or similar substitutes that could endanger the well-being of the official.
- It is preferred, but not required, that the referee stand be adjustable to ensure that the R1's head is 2-3 feet above the height of the net.
- Referee platforms shall be padded to a minimum height of 5½ feet with at least 1-inch-thick, resilient, shock-absorbing material (such as polyethylene foam).
- If there are any issues, the referee should notify the host school and the state association.

**SITUATION 1:** The R1 examines the referee stand before the match and notices a broken pin securing the platform to the stand. The R1 addresses the issue with host management, and they are unable to replace the stand. **RULING:** The R1 officiates from the floor. **COMMENT:** Referees should never step on a stand that is unsecure or broken. After the match, the official shall notify the state association.

**SITUATION 2:** The R2 notices the referee stand is missing padding on the front bar of the stand. Host management addresses the situation by using: (a) a 1-inch-thick foam pool noodle; (b) a ½-inch-thick foam pool noodle. **RULING**: (a) Compliant; (b) non-compliant. **COMMENT:** Padding must meet the minimum thickness requirements for competition. In (b), unless host management can locate appropriate padding for the platform, the stand shall be removed and the R1 will officiate from the floor. The state association shall be notified.




**SITUATION 3:** The R1 arrives at the site with a step stool and places it on top of the platform to allow for optimal sight lines from the referee stand. **RULING:** Non-compliant. **COMMENT:** To ensure the safety of the R1, boxes, stools, etc. shall not be placed on the referee stand. Cushions intended to relieve the stress on joints when standing for long periods of time may be placed flat on the platform.