



## A Real Play, A Real Mistake, Real Learning

By Jay Shaheen

Here's a tough play. Fortunately, it won't happen too often. The problem with infrequent occurrences during a volleyball match is that it is difficult to remember whether or not they are legal and the proper actions to take if they are not. Some officials commonly think they don't have to review rules each season, especially those who have been working for many years. Think again!

**What happened:** I was the umpire. Just prior to the start of a rally-point game, I checked the players on the court for both teams. I rolled the ball to player #23, the first server for Team A, who began the game with an ace making the score 1-0. Player #23 served again. Team B won the rally making the score 1-1. Team B rotated and prepared to serve. Prior to the referee's beckon, Team A requested a substitution: 14 for 24. I administered the substitution then signaled my readiness to the referee. Immediately, the scorekeeper hailed me in an urgent tone. "Hey Ref, Ref. Wait!" I held up the "stop" sign to my partner. Both the head coach and the statistician for Team A approached me as the scorekeeper uttered words which would ultimately inspire this article: "Number 14 is already supposed to be in the game!" In disbelief, I grabbed the line-up sheet. Sure enough! The reality suddenly struck me that, for the first time in my career, I had failed to detect a discrepancy between a submitted line-up and the players on the court who began the game. I had mistaken #24 for #14. The statistician agreed.

Before reading on, decide what you would do in this situation. Don't open the rule book. Assume you

could not receive any help. Challenge yourself to make a decision - right now.

**The ensuing discussion:** The Team A coach was somewhat perturbed but spoke calmly. "Jay, aren't you supposed to check my players? Wasn't that your mistake?" I looked her in the eye and gently replied, "Yes it was my mistake; but the rule book makes it your responsibility to ensure the right players are out there, coach." As I spoke, my brain scurried to access the proper procedure for this situation. I thought, "C'mon, you've studied this. What happens next? You've got an illegal player in the game. Now what?" The Team B coach walked to the score table. "What's going on here, Jay?" she inquired impatiently. The scorekeeper asked, "How do I record that sub, Ref?" What were the options: Do I remove points? Award points? Does this substitution count toward the team's 18 limit? Is there a penalty? C'mon, Jay, you *know* this!

Having to answer these questions on a written test suddenly seemed a simple task compared to being surrounded by four people waiting for me to speak, not to mention players and fans all staring in my direction. Although I did not feel totally certain, I made a decision.

**How I ruled:** Player #14, the player who was listed on the line-up to begin the game, remains on the court. The substitution #14 for #24 does not count toward the team's 18 limit. The point scored by Team A is

cancelled because it was earned with an illegal player in the game and because this discovery was made prior to the serve alternating and the next serve being contacted by Team B. No additional points are awarded to Team B. The match continues with Team B serving and leading 1-0.

### How I should have ruled:

Following the match, I could not get to the rule book fast enough: Well, I got *most* of it right but missed one important step - the penalty. Whenever an illegal player or substitute attempts to enter or is found in the game, the penalty is a charged time-out for unnecessary delay. If the team has no time-outs remaining, a

point or side-out is awarded to the opponents. (Try not to confuse this with an improper server - if a legal player serves out of order, the penalty is different.) It's a natural error to believe that any removal of points constitutes the penalty, but this is not the case. Think of point-removal simply as taking away what was illegally

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## From the President - More on Improving your "rank" in officiating

As we say goodbye to another season, we should take time to reflect on the goals we accomplished. This year, a large percentage of our association members were selected for the MHSAA playoff tournament. It gives me great pleasure to see such a contingent of our fellow officials honored. Besides sharing a love for our sport, those selected to work the playoffs enjoy another common bond -- making solid, attainable goals and constantly working to meet them. I urge you to take a strong look at the goals you set for yourself. Are they too high? Too low? It takes a strong individual to look inside and determine your weaknesses. Before you pack up the uniform for the summer, think about how well you officiated this season.

Last month, we looked at ways we can avoid becoming (or staying) "Privates." This month, I would like to add to that discussion by conveying the importance of communicating with your officiating crew.

As a referee, you have the advantage of being elevated above the court. At the same time, you are at a disadvantage since you are in a fixed position. This severely limits your view of many areas of the court, especially given the fast-paced tempo of today's game. Therefore, it is imperative that you utilize, and hence communicate with, all members of your "team." The following are some keys to successfully communicating with your fellow officials.

**1. Have a good pre-match discussion.** The referee should lead the discussion with the umpire and the line judges before the match. As an umpire, offer what you will do to help on specific plays. For instance, blowing the whistle and signaling for a ball that hits or passes outside the antenna on your side of the net. What will the referee do if there is a substitution or time-out request while the umpire is distracted? I would hope that the referee would signal, but not blow the whistle, offering a chance for his/her partner to correctly whistle and signal.

What about help on pancakes? A good umpire will immediately step out from the pole and signal, but not whistle, "ball down" when they think a pancake was unsuccessful. Of course, these are just a few of the topics that should be discussed prior to a match. Try to leave no stone unturned, including issuing cards and the coin toss for the deciding game. The general "Rule of Thumb" is: If we don't talk about it, it will happen.

**2. Using the line judges for help.** Although we sometimes easily forget, the line judges are an integral part of the officiating team. The manner in which they conduct themselves throughout a match speaks volumes about their performance. One of the first things I talk about with my line judges is the importance of giving me every call regardless of how obvious it is to them. This does two things: First, it gives them practice so when they have a really close call to make, they are used to signaling. Secondly, the coaches, fans, and players will be more confident that the correct call is being made. This is especially true if every call a line judge makes is made emphatically. However, the referee can easily discourage (knowingly or not) the work of a line judge by not glancing at them every time the ball hits the court near a line. If you don't use this technique as a referee, ask yourself, "Would I work hard as a line judge if I thought no one was paying any attention to me?"

**3. Maintain good eye contact with your partner.** You will be amazed at how much communicating you can do without moving your arms or your lips. In the case of the umpire, you have much to offer. Four-hits, double contacts and prolonged contact out of the view of the referee are all calls that can be offered by a discreet signal to your partner. We have all been on the stand when we have no idea what just happened either because we blanked out or were blocked out. These are the times the umpire is needed most. Take a quick glance



Fusako Hines, ESVBOA President

down to your partner. If you are the umpire and have something, give it! Your referee needs you. There is no greater feeling for an officiating crew than to know you worked together to get a call right.

These are just a few suggestions to give you more confidence in your next match. They take much practice to instill as a regular part of your game. But I promise you, it will be well worth the effort.

Whistle while you work, and always strive for the highest "rank" possible.

Fusako

### International Volleyball Comes to Detroit!

Saturday, April 20,  
2002  
7:00 p.m.

USA Women's  
National Volleyball  
Team

vs.

Tianjin of China

@ Palace of Auburn Hills

Visit [www.palacenet.com](http://www.palacenet.com) for  
ticket info.

## Real Learning

(continued from p.1)

earned. Then enforce the penalty.

**What could have happened:** To enhance thorough learning from my mistake, imagining *what-ifs* is critical: What if illegal player #24 was discovered in the game prior to the serve alternating to Team B? Ruling: Get legal player #14 on the floor, remove points known to have been scored by Team A during *that* term of service, charge Team A with a time-out for unnecessary delay, Team A continues serving. To challenge myself, I raised the ante: What if illegal player #24 rotated into the serving position, served the ball, and *then* the discov-

ery was made by an attentive scorekeeper? Yikes! Now we have an illegal player *and* an improper server. Ruling: Amazingly, I found this exact play in the Case Book. In a curious ruling, the officials are instructed to charge Team A with a time-out for unnecessary delay for the illegal player *and* award a side-out to Team B for the wrong server. Additionally, if the scorekeeper *wasn't* so attentive and allowed #24 to serve any points prior to discovery, those points would be removed. Hmm. My guess is that we would have an angry coach to contend with. Reason enough for me to be more careful when checking line-ups prior to the start of each game (6-3 Pen.; 9-9 Pen.; 10-3-2; 10-3 Pen.;

Case Book: 10-3-7B; 10-3-Pen.B; 10-3-Pen.D).

An illegal substitute attempting to enter the game is relatively common. An illegal player found in the game is infrequent. Stay calm and remember that a possible loss of points is the consequence; unnecessary delay is the penalty. Study unusual match situations. Above all, minimize preventable problems. For instance, accurately check players on the court prior to the start of each game.

### Proposed ESVBOA Meeting Dates for 2002-03 Season

**October 27, 2002** - U of M Dearborn Fieldhouse - 2:00 p.m.

**December 7, 2002** - ESVBOA Clinic @ TBD - 9:00 a.m.

**January 5, 2003** - Westfield Community Center - 2:00 p.m.

**February 23, 2003** - Oakland County Venue? - 2:00 p.m.

**March 16, 2003** - End of Year Party @ Peace Lutheran (Warren) - 2:00p.m.

## Correction

In the article "Bright Lights, Big Show" appearing in the January 2002 edition, it was stated that Ann Hutchins is a five year Big Ten referee. Ann has in fact been on the Big Ten staff since 1980, making the 2001 season her 22nd. Black and White apologizes for this error.

## MHSAA FINAL FOUR LINE JUDGES

Congratulations to the officials from ESVBOA selected to work this year's finals: **Arnie Gray, Sharon Harris-Higgins, Ann Hutchins, Pat Jones, Judd Kastner, Kay Kornes, George Pearson, and Jay Shaheen**

## Excellence in Officiating

### ESVBOA well represented in 2002 MHSAA Volleyball Tournament

In a true measure of the officiating excellence that our association promotes, an overwhelming number of ESVBOA members have once again been selected for post-season play. Each year, more and more officials from our ranks are chosen to work the MHSAA Volleyball Tournament. Congratulations to our fellow officials and their accomplishments in the 2001-02 season!

### District

Janet Avery, Jean Blievernicht, Dory Bryant, Bill Crouch, Karen Draves, Cathy Dritsas, Arnie Gray, Collette Hallberg, Sharon Harris-Higgins, Bobby Hill, Rick Hillman, Fusako Hines, Ann Hutchins, Geri Jackson, Russ Koppitz, Kay Kornes, Evie Langlands, Kristi Langenbacher, Jan LeMerise, Tom Lieckfelt, Dee Marquis, Steve Miller, Mike Mullin, Ronnie Mutter, Owen Nakamura, Bette Norman-Nakamura, George Pearson, Kim Prentice, Don Schima, Jay Shaheen, Jim Szur, Elaine Torvinen, Pat Jones

### Regional

Dory Bryant, Karen Draves, Arnie Gray, Sharon Harris-Higgins, Fusako Hines, Rick Hillman, Ann Hutchins, Geri Jackson, Evie Langlands, Jan LeMerise, Steve Miller, George Pearson, Kim Prentice, Don Schima, Jay Shaheen, Pat Jones

### Quarterfinals

Karen Draves, Fusako Hines, Ann Hutchins

### Semifinals

Karen Draves, Steve Miller, Kim Prentice

### Finals

Steve Miller, Kim Prentice

**Interested in officiating more  
during the  
"off-season?"**



USA Volleyball offers many opportunities for officials to advance their skills.

To become certified as a USAV referee you must:

1. File an official USA Volleyball application with your Region and pay dues
2. Attend a Regional official's clinic
3. Attain a score of 100% on an open book test
4. Be practically evaluated (on court)

Contact: Ronnie Mutter, USA Volleyball - Michigan Referee  
Chair  
248-740-9848  
tmmut@juno.com

**Ideas for *Black and White*?**

If you have ideas or plays to include in future issues, e-mail them to [scmiller11@comcast.net](mailto:scmiller11@comcast.net). If you do not have e-mail, you may send your materials to Black and White, 15220 Toepfer, Eastpointe, MI 48021.

**Look for *Black and White* -  
Summer Edition!**

Story ideas are now being assembled for the "Summer Edition" of *Black and White*, tentatively scheduled for an August release. If you have an idea or suggestion for this special issue, e-mail them to [scmiller11@comcast.net](mailto:scmiller11@comcast.net). Make sure to include "*Black and White*" in the subject line.



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**Eastside Volleyball Officials Association**

*An MHSAA Approved Association*