

South Dakota High School Association Volleyball Officials Wireless Crew Communication Guidelines and Requirements

The primary benefits of crew communication devices in volleyball are 1) efficient communication between officials to prevent extended delays and 2) to augment some of the discrete signals used by volleyball officials to allow for better recognition of those instances.

These guidelines address the use of headsets by volleyball officials to provide improved communication between the R1 and R2 by allowing direct verbal communication for the officials. The policy will address headset use during any level of competition.

DEFINITIONS

A crew communication device is defined as two-way radio with an earpiece. This may include either a push-to-talk or “always open” microphone and may be either hardwired, wireless, or Bluetooth. Other types of unofficial communication devices (such as handheld radios or walkie-talkies, etc.) are prohibited and may not be carried by an official during competition.

GENERAL USE GUIDELINES

--Head set use is optional. No referee should feel pressured to use them and any use of headsets should be arranged in advance between partners. If in doubt, headsets should not be used. If used, the officials will provide the headsets. Maintain professionalism at all times during the match.

--Headsets do not replace any established signals. Assistance provided to the R1 with any other signals should all be used as normal.

--The use of headsets during play, or between sets, is not for extraneous communication...it can prove quite distracting.

--Officials should be ever mindful that most radio systems are **NOT** secure from the public. Careful attention must be paid to what is said when speaking into the headsets. The safest approach would be: “If you don’t want it on the public address system, don’t say it on the radio!”

--Be careful of facial expressions and body language.

--A comment made that is not associated with the game might automatically generate a response from your partner that is inappropriate. Small laughs or frowns can be misunderstood or misinterpreted that we are conversing with our referee partner and not concentrating on the match.

--Referees should learn to “talk through” your whistle during a rally. Remember that the R1 will hear at least the R2’s portion of any conversation with a coach, along with being able to hear the coach as well. Between points, if the R1 and R2 need to communicate, it may be appropriate to place a hand over the mouth to prevent “lip reading”. Conversations between officials may be heard by anyone standing near the officials.

--Headsets will not be used during post-season per SDHSAA

PRE-MATCH COMMUNICATION

--The officials must facilitate clear communications and expectations regarding the use of the devices. They are responsible for ensuring the devices are charged and working properly before the match starts.

--Crews must ensure that the channel or frequency of the communication devices **DOES NOT** interfere with any communication devices of the coaching staffs and/or match administration. It is the crew’s responsibility to avoid channel or frequency conflicts with any other party.

DURING THE MATCH

- The use of these crew communication devices **SHALL NOT** replace any NFHS or SDHSAA approved mechanics, crew communication signals, or other signals designated by any NFHS or SDHSAA sources.
- Crew communication devices **SHALL NOT** negate any responsibilities of the R2 to maintain a proper lineup card.
- Crew communication devices are intended solely to ensure timely communication between officials; thus allowing timely communications with coaches, table personnel, and host management—when needed. All communication on the devices must be directly related to the contest using only appropriate and professional language.
 - Do not use any inappropriate language, derogatory statements or comments in reference to any player, coach, fan, etc.
 - Crew members must keep communication short, simple, and to the point. Keep chatter and unnecessary comments off of the devices.
 - Work to use only one word and repeat it three times to your partner such as “No-No-No” versus “No touch”. This keeps the conversation simple and prevents using too many words carelessly.
- Between rallies, the R1 and R2 may communicate pertinent information to one another. For instance:
 - A conference regarding a specific rule.
 - A conference regarding a particular play.
 - Situations when both teams are substituting or when one team is requesting a time out.
 - Request by the R2 for unsporting penalties to be applied to a team, coach, or player.
 - To provide explanation for delays or to pass along questions of a coach.
 - Libero service position.
- During a rally, the R2 may communicate with the R1 to assist and expedite the ruling process. When communicating during the rally, the R2 could utilize simple verbiage in blocks of three. For instance:
 - Overhead pass in the front zone by the Libero = “Libero, Libero, Libero”
 - Overhead pass by the Libero behind the attack line = “Good, good, good”
 - Illegal back row setter = “Back, back, back”
 - Back row player takes off on or in front of the attack line = “Back, back, back”
 - Back row player takes off behind the attack line = “good, good, good”
 - Blocker reaching over = “Over, over, over”
 - Glancing touch on the block = “Touch, touch, touch”
 - A ball “out” on the R2’s sideline (when the LJ may not have a good look) = “Out, out, out”
 - A ball “in” on the R2’s sideline (when the LJ may not have a good look) = “In, in, in”
 - Successful pancake = “Good, good, good”
 - Unsuccessful pancake = “Down, down, down”
 - Potential four-hit violation = “Four, four, four”

Summary of Guidelines:

Purpose

The policy allows volleyball officials to use wireless headset communication systems to improve communication between the R1 and R2 officials, helping reduce delays and improve recognition of specific situations during matches.

What Is Allowed

- Crew communication devices may be wired, wireless, Bluetooth, push-to-talk, or open-microphone systems with earpieces.
- Use of headsets is optional and must be agreed upon by both officials before the match. Officials provide their own equipment.

What Is Not Allowed

- Handheld radios, walkie-talkies, and other unofficial communication devices may not be used during competition.
- Headsets may not replace NFHS or SDHSAA officiating mechanics, signals, or responsibilities.
- Headsets will not be used during postseason competitions per SDHSAA.

Communication Expectations

Officials should:

- Always maintain professionalism.
- Avoid unnecessary chatter or non-game-related discussion.
- Use short, simple communications. The document recommends using one-word commands repeated three times.
- Be aware that many radio systems are not secure and communication may be overheard.
- Avoid inappropriate, derogatory, or unprofessional comments about players, coaches, or spectators.

Pre-Match Requirements

- Officials are responsible for ensuring devices are charged and functioning properly.

- Crews must ensure their communication frequencies do not interfere with school, coaching staff, or event-management communications.

During the Match

Headsets are intended to:

- Facilitate quick communication between officials.
- Help communicate with coaches, scorers, and event personnel when needed.
- Allow discussion of rule interpretations, plays, substitutions, timeouts, libero service positions, delays, and unsporting conduct situations.

Suggested Rally Communication Terms

One-word verbal cues, repeated three times, such as:

- “Libero, Libero, Libero” for a libero overhead pass in the front zone.
- “Back, Back, Back” for back-row violations.
- “Touch, Touch, Touch” for a block touch.
- “In, In, In” or “Out, Out, Out” for line calls.
- “Four, Four, Four” for a potential four-hit violation.