

LIBERO

EXCHANGE RULES

A Concise Guide for Coaches, Players & Officials

WHAT IS THE LIBERO?

DEFINITION

- ▶ A specialized defensive player in a contrasting jersey
- ▶ Limited to back-row positions only
- ▶ Cannot set overhead from the front zone for an attack above net height, attack above the net or block.
- ▶ Each team may designate 1 or 2 liberos on the roster
- ▶ The libero does not count toward substitution limits

QUICK FACTS

Jersey

Clearly contrasting from teammates

Max Liberos

1 or 2 designated pre-match

Position

Back row only

Replacements

Unlimited (per rules)

Subs Used?

No — libero exchanges do not count as subs

HOW LIBERO EXCHANGES WORK

1

Dead Ball Only

Exchange occurs after the rally ends, before the next serve whistle.

2

Replacement Zone

Libero enters/exits between the attack line and end line.

3

Same Player Returns

The replaced player must be the one who returns when libero exits.

4

One Rally Gap

At least one rally must be played between consecutive exchanges.

★ THE DOUBLE EXCHANGE (Serving Libero)

Scenario: Libero is already on the court in for Player A. The team earns a side-out — it is now Player B's turn to serve, and Player A is rotating to the front row.

THE EXCHANGE

Three Players Move

Player A enters the court (returning from their libero exchange). Player B exits the court. The libero moves to the serving position.



WHY IT'S LEGAL

One Dead Ball, Two Swaps

Player A's return completes the original libero exchange. The libero stepping in for Player B is a new, simultaneous exchange — both happen at once.



THE NEW STATE

Libero Now In for Player B

The libero is now recorded as in for Player B. When the libero next exits, Player B — not Player A — must be the one to return.

LIBERO RESTRICTIONS

X CANNOT DO

- X Attack the ball above the height of the net
- X Set overhand from in front of the attack line for an attack above net height
- X Block or attempt to block
- X Rotate to the front row
- X Play as libero after a replacement libero is designated
- X Serve for more than one player
- X Exchange in the substitution zone

✓ CAN DO

- ✓ Dig and receive serve in back row
- ✓ Set from behind the attack line
- ✓ Underhand pass anywhere on the court
- ✓ Serve in one designated rotation per set
- ✓ Replace any back-row player
- ✓ Enter/exit multiple times per set with no substitution limit
- ✓ Exchange between the attack line and the end line

TWO-LIBERO SYSTEM

① Designating Two Liberos

Both liberos must be listed on the lineup sheet before the first set. They wear jerseys that are contrasting from the team (these may be different from each other). Each must have a unique number. (Allowed to wear different bottoms than the team)

② Serving

Liberos can serve in one position, even when two liberos are used.

③ Replacing Each Other

Libero 1 and Libero 2 may replace each other on the court. When one replaces the other, no separate player is involved — one libero simply swaps for the other. This can happen after each completed rally.

④ Injury / Exceptional Sub

If a libero is injured and cannot continue, the second libero takes over. If both are unavailable and no other eligible player is available, the coach may request an exceptional substitution.

⑤ Tracker & Recordkeeping

The libero tracker records all exchanges on the libero tracking sheet. Each serving rotation and replacement must be logged accurately throughout the match. They also record substitutions.

LIBERO TRACKING SHEET

① Who Keeps It

A designated libero tracker (separate from the scorekeeper) records every exchange on the official libero tracking sheet.

② What Is Recorded

Each time the libero enters or exits, the tracker logs: which player the libero replaced. Substitutions are also recorded.

③ Why It Matters

The sheet ensures the correct player returns for the libero, serving rotations aren't violated, and the one-rally gap rule is enforced.

LIBERO TRACKING SHEET — Example (Set 1)

TEAM: Eastview HS

L: 10

GAME	Serving Order	SP	Libero Entry / Exit (slash notation)
1	I	3	3 / L <i>Libero enters for #3</i>
	II	7	L / 3 <i>Libero exits; #3 returns</i>
	III	14	14 / L ▲ <i>Libero serves; enters for #14</i>
	IV	14	L / 14 <i>Libero exits after serve; #14 returns</i>
	V	3	3 / L <i>Libero re-enters for #3</i>
	VI	7	L / 3 <i>Libero exits; #3 returns</i>
▲ = Libero serving rotation SP# / L = libero enters L / SP# = libero exits			

COMMON VIOLATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

VIOLATION	CONSEQUENCE
Exchange after signal for serve	Libero exchange illegal; loss of rally
Incorrect player returns (not original)	Illegal substitution; loss of rally
Libero attacks above net height	Back row attack; loss of rally
Libero sets from front zone (overhand) leading to front-row attack above net	Back row attack; loss of rally
Less than one rally between exchanges	Illegal exchange; unnecessary delay (if caught before whistle for serve)
Libero in front row at serve	Illegal alignment; loss of rally
Libero serves in more than one rotation per set	Illegal serve; loss of rally

QUICK REFERENCE

NFHS Libero Exchange — Key Rules at a Glance

Exchange Zone

**Between attack line
& end line**

When to Exchange

**Dead ball only —
before next serve whistle**

Gap Required

**≥ 1 rally between
consecutive exchanges**

Returning Player

**SAME player who
was replaced**

Substitutions Used

**NONE — exchanges
are unlimited & free**

Serving

May serve in ONE position