

Blocking Defined

Blocking by far is the one of the hardest part of the game, especially at the level and speed at which players continue to play at each year. The blocking rule according to coaches is in the top two or three inconsistently applied rules in the volleyball today. And according to officials it is one of the hardest rules to understand and apply during a rally.

First let us define who is a blocker: Rule 9-5-1c Any player who is close to the net (within arms length of the net) reaching high than the net with **any part** of their hand(s). We do not judge on whether the hand is facing the net or not and whether or not the player is facing the net, and we do not judge the intent of the player. We need to keep it simple with two points of definition, player near the net and hand(s) reaching higher than the net.

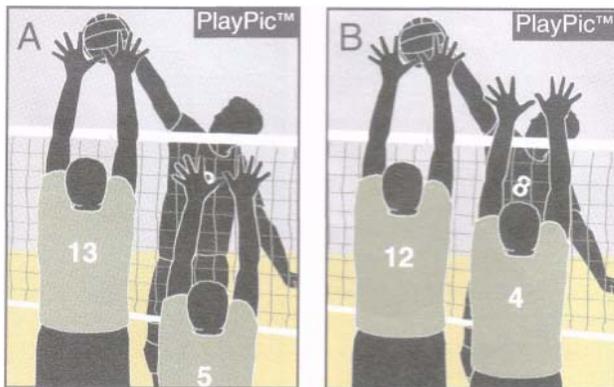
Second let us define what a block attempt is: Rule 9-5-1c (1) Any player who is close to the net (within arms length of the net) reaching high than the net with **any part** of their hand(s) and **does not** deflect the ball coming from the opponents is attempting to block. Any player on the floor, front row or back row players may legally attempt to block **except the libero (Rule 9-5-6c)**.

Third let us define what a completed block is: Rule 9-5-1c (2) Any player who is close to the net (within arms length of the net) reaching high than the net with **any part** of their hand(s) deflects the ball from the opponents. A deflection is defined as touching the ball in a manner that it takes it off its original trajectory from the opponent's attacker. In other words the ball does not have to go back to the opponents it may just slow it down thus allowing their own teammates to play the ball. ***You cannot deflect a ball from your own team that would be considered an attack.***

Fourth let us define what a collective block is: Rule 9-5-1c (3) Two or more players close to each other (within arms length of each other) and close to the net (within arms length of the net) with **all players** involved reaching higher than the net with any part of their hand(s) deflects the ball from the opponents, completes a block. Both players **do not** have to deflect the ball, only one in the collective block has to deflect the ball to be defined as a collective block.

In PlayPic A below player #13 is our front row blocker and player #5 is considered our back-row player (setter). This is not a collective block since player #5 does not have any part of their hand(s) above the height of the net. This is a legal play Rule 9-5-1c

In PlayPic B below player #12 is our front row blocker and player #4 is considered our back-row player (setter). This is considered a collective block since player #4 is within arms length of player #12 and within arms length of the net and reaching higher than the net with their hand(s) and one of the blockers within the collective block deflects the ball from the opponents. This is an illegal play Rule 9-5-1c note



Hopefully this will assist you in making the call right the first time. Please remember as a first referee we must trust the second referee to assist with this call and or make the call Rule 5-4-3b (7). The second referee may at times need to take a position slightly away from the center line extended to better see this violation.