

# Changes to the 2026 VC Youth Nationals Competition Guide

As of October 2025

This document outlines the major changes that have been made to the Youth Nationals Competition Guide. Each change will be indicated by the current year's event rule, and the reason for change. Please see the 2026 Competition Guide for full details regarding each of the regulations listed below.

## 1.

**1.8 Minimum Age:** All athletes, coaches and team personnel members that are on the official roster for Nationals must be a minimum of 11 years of age.

**New for 2026!** Team personnel who are parents of children under the age of 11, and do not have additional parental support on site, will be supported by Volleyball Canada in having the child on the bench during matches. The child may not participate in warm up and must remain on the bench throughout the entirety of the match. The team must complete a Risk Acknowledgement form as they are exposing the child to a higher-risk environment.

### *Reasoning*

Additional support for coaches with young children and clarification that a waiver is required.

## 2.

**1.12 Registration for teams playing up:**

**New for 2026!** Any teams playing up by 1 or more divisions from their declared age category will submit their expression of interest during the general expression of interest period. Teams will be required to indicate on the expression of interest form that they are playing up.

### *Reasoning*

Playing up teams will now be included in the general expression of interest period to better assess overall interest in participation and to better support the planning timelines for teams. They will no longer be submitting an expression of interest after the general expression of interest period.

## 3.

**1.14 Withdrawal Policy:**

Teams who withdraw from Nationals must complete the withdrawal form found on the Nationals webpage.

**New for 2026!** Withdrawals need to be approved by the head coach, club president/director, and team contact (as indicated during EOI process)

### *Reasoning*

An additional verification process will help Volleyball Canada to ensure that teams are not removed if there is still intention to participate.

## **4.**

**1.18 14U Events:** 14U events offer regional access to teams to help offset travel costs however teams are welcome to attend any event they wish.

**New for 2026!** In an effort to increase accessibility to 14U events, each club can have a maximum of 3 teams invited to register during the initial invitation window. A large club is defined as more than 3 teams who have expressed interest in one event (of age and playing up are not combined). Once a club reaches three invited teams, the additional teams will be moved to the bottom of the OF AGE teams list, while keeping their original draw order.

### *Reasoning*

The large club limitation will increase accessibility to participate and will broaden regional diversity.

## **5.**

5.3. 15U – 18U will be officiated by two referees.

**New for 2026!** 14U will be officiated by 2 referees for all events except Moncton, NB which will be officiated by 1 referee for pool play, Championship Tier matches will be officiated by 2 referees.

### *Reasoning*

The addition of the second referee for all matches at 14U will support the development of referees across the country and will also provide a more complete match experience for participating teams.

## **6.**

### **6.4 Cameras and Tripods**

Teams are permitted to record matches throughout the Nationals tournament however please note:

- Tripods are not permitted on the sport court nor can they be placed in any team or player areas (Team bench, warm up zone, serving zone).
- Tripods cannot be placed in areas not permitted for spectators,
- VC is not responsible for any damage to the camera or related equipment
- VC reserves the right to restrict/deny the filming of any matches or to move or remove a camera

### *Reasoning*

Removal of the requirement of cameras to be manned during matches. Also provides Volleyball Canada staff the opportunity to move an unmanned camera should it be placed in an improper location.

## **7.**

### **6.6 Noisemakers**

Volleyball Canada acknowledges that competition venues may be loud and encourages spectators to take precautions, as needed, to protect hearing, especially that of young children/infants.

**New for 2026!** As a pilot for 2026, the use of any type of noise makers (cowbells, air horns, drums, whistles, phone applications, etc) is prohibited. The use of noisemakers may lead to the confiscation of the item and/or removal of the individual from the facility.

#### *Reasoning*

Volleyball Canada will be testing the ability to reduce noise during nationals in an effort to make a more enjoyable experience for all participants. This will be following suit of many provincial and territorial associations who are also implementing or have implemented this rule.

## **8.**

### **6.10 Side Changes**

**New for 2026!** There will be no side switching in-between sets for all National Championships. Should there be a court with a clear advantage on one side, then a side switch will be permitted between sets. Teams will be notified should they be permitted side switches, requests for side switching will not be accepted. Teams will be pre-assigned a side of the court, however, they may move to the other side of the court should they win the coin toss.

#### *Reasoning*

This change is being implemented in an effort to keep all matches on schedule, and to streamline the overall participant and spectator experience.