

What's New 2025-2026

FORMATS AND RULES OF THE GAME

4V4G RALLYBALL

The 2026 4v4G Ontario Championships will feature two divisions.

- Teams will self-declare into Division 1 or Division 2 and a team's set ratio from the Bugarski Cup will seed teams within each Division. The self-declare deadline for 4v4G is 11:59 p.m. on Monday, February 16. A link will be sent to all teams in early February.
- A team's set ratio from the Bugarski Cup will also be used as a secondary criterion to adjust a team's self-declare option (if needed) to ensure the correct number of teams are placed in each Division.
- Division 1 and Division 2 will both be tiered into smaller playoff brackets on Day 2 to maximize competitive balance.

The VUL500 Volleyball (White) will no longer be used for OVA competition starting in the **2026 - 2027** season. This upcoming 2025-2026 season will be the last year the VUL500 volleyball will be used for the 4v4 Rallyball division. Starting in the 2026-2027 season, the VQ200 (Green/White – Currently used in 6v6 – 15U) will be used for 4v4 Rallyball.

EARLY CONTACT INITIATIVE – AGE ELIGIBILITY UPDATE

The 25/26 season will maintain the same age eligibility structure for the Early Contact Initiative (ECI) divisions (4v4, 6v6, and TLS) as in previous years with a slight tweak to the in-season movement.

- TLS
 - Chronological Age: January 1 – December 31, 2012
 - Extended Age Class: September 1 – December 31, 2011
 - Note: Athletes born between January 1 – August 31, 2011, may participate in the TLS division through an approved application process. Applications open July 1, 2025, and can be submitted with this link located [HERE](#). This application process is open until the roster lock deadline of February 1st for new players.
- 6v6 Rallyball
 - Chronological Age: January 1 – December 31, 2013
 - Extended Age Class: January 1 – December 31, 2012
- 4v4 Rallyball
 - Chronological Age: January 1 – December 31, 2014
 - Extended Age Class: January 1 – December 31, 2013

New for the 2025/26 season:

- Early Contact divisions will now align with the standard OVA protocol for Extended Age Class participation, with one difference. As of February 1st, Athletes registered under the Extended Age Class in 4v4, 6v6 or TLS may only be listed on the roster for that specific age category. These athletes are not permitted to move up or down to another age division as individuals. However, they may compete in an older age division if their entire team is registered to play up.

NEW YEAR'S OPEN (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE 18U MCGREGOR CUP):

The New Year's Open is a 2-day event for the entire 18UG & 18UB age groups located at the International Centre in Mississauga on 24 courts. This event replaces the 18U McGregor Cup as the third event in the 18U regular season.

- More information will be available on the OVA's Convention Centre Page located [HERE](#)
- Dates:

- January 16 – 17, 2026 (Event 1)
 - 18UB Division 1 (Teams ranked #1 - #32)
 - 18UG Division 1 (Teams ranked #1 - #64)
- January 17 - 18, 2026 (Event 2)
 - 18UB Division 2 (Teams ranked #33 - #64)
 - 18UG Division 2 (Teams ranked #65 - #128)
- Qualification:
 - 18U Teams (of age) are guaranteed entry as long as they have competed in the Provincial and/or Challenge Cup as they must be listed in the post 18U Challenge Cup rankings (Overall Average).
 - *Unique scenarios may be reviewed for of age teams who have not participated in either the 18U Provincial or Challenge Cups*
 - 17U Teams (underage) will be accepted to fill out the Boys (64 Team) and Girls (128 Team) tournament draws.
 - Underage teams will be accepted based on rank. Meaning the highest ranked underage teams will be accepted first based on the post 18U Challenge Cup Rankings (Overall Average)
 - An underage team who would like to participate in the New Year's Open must compete in either the 18U Provincial Cup or 18U Challenge Cup to be included in the post 18U Challenge Cup Rankings (Overall Average). An underage team cannot participate in the New Year's Open if it is their first 18U event of the season.
 - *Unique scenarios may be looked at if it helps fill out the tournament draw, and all other interested underage teams have already been accepted*
 - Seeding:
 - Teams will be seeded into Division 1 or Division 2 based on the post 18U Challenge Cup Rankings (Overall average).
 - There is no realignment after the 18U Challenge Cup as the traditional Premier, Select, Championship & Trillium tiers do not exist in the 18U New Year's Open.
 - To clarify, teams that have only competed in either the 18U Provincial Cup **OR** Challenge Cup (i.e. 1 previous event) still qualify and are seeded based on the post Challenge Cup rankings (Overall average).
 - For example, if a team only competed in the 18UG Challenge Cup and finished 2nd in the Championship tier. They earned 775 points and will have an overall average of 775 points as their only finish.
 - Points:
 - A new points structure will be introduced for this event weighted in a similar manner as the other four 18U regular season events.
 - Points received at the New Year's Open will count towards a team ranking just like any other 18U regular season event and can be used towards a team's top 2 average for Ontario Championship seeding.
 - Realignment into future events:
 - The post New Year's Open Rankings (Overall Average) will be used to assign teams into tiers for the Furlani Cup (except for the GPQ):
 - Grand Prix Qualifier (aka Premier)
 - Top 12 ranked teams based on **top 2 average**
 - Select, Championship, Trillium White and Trillium Green:
 - Teams will be assigned into tiers based on the post New Year's Open Rankings (Overall Average)
 - Please note – Section 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 Initial Placement policies will be followed when creating the 18U Furlani Cup tiers to maintain competitive balance.
 - Step 3 of section 5.4 will also be taken into consideration for teams that did not participate in the New Year's Open to ensure they are still placed in an appropriate tier for the 18U Furlani Cup to maintain appropriate competitive balance.

GRAND PRIX EVENTS

The 16U & 17U Grand Prix events will now feature a 12 team draw (based on top 2 average followed by overall average) instead of the traditional 8 team format.

- The 18U Grand Prix events will still feature the 8-team format as the 18U age group has five regular season events which includes the 18U Grand Prix Qualifier 12 team format.

WARM-UP PROTOCOL ADJUSTMENT FOR ONTARIO CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

The Ontario Championships have traditionally seen a 5-5 warm-up for all matches within each event. The 2026 Ontario Championships will now follow the regular season Secondary Warm-up Protocol of a 2-4-4 for all matches within the tournament (Unless Noted Otherwise).

(2-4-4): For all matches within the Ontario Championships:

- Two (2) minutes of shared court time for ball handling
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for serving Team
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for the receiving Team
- No shared hitting and serving

Warm up protocols may change throughout the year depending on tournament format, permit restrictions and any other event variables.

WARM-UP PROTOCOL ADJUSTMENT FOR ALL CONVENTION CENTRE EVENTS

Teams are now required to warm-up baseline to net instead of sideline to sideline. This is to help cut down the number of rogue volleyballs affecting play in nearby courts.

- This rule is mandatory for convention centres but is also recommended for all regular season tournaments when there are tight courts side by side.

LINING AND SCORING FOR OVA TOURNAMENTS

The 24/25 Lining and Scoring protocol will continue for the 25/26 season with one tweak for the TLS age group.

- TLS will now follow the same Lining & Scoring protocol as 4v4/6v6 Rallyball. The ECI age groups (4v4, 6v6 & TLS) will use parent/team volunteers as both scorers and lines persons.
- 15U – 18U will continue with athletes completing the lining duties along with parent/team volunteers at the score table.
- Clarification around roster size for 15U – 18U lining duties.
 - Each team will be required to provide one (1) volunteer athlete from their roster per game, to act in the role of line judge. Should a team not have sufficient athletes (roster of eight or fewer) to fill this role, the opposing team will be asked to supply an athlete volunteer from their roster to fill the second line judge role. If this is not possible, the referee may approve that no line judges will be used for that game/match.
 - If a team having nine (9) or more athletes on their roster chooses not to comply with the line judge requirements, they will receive a three (3) point penalty per set that they do not comply in addition to the \$75 per set fine as per the OVA Fines and Sanctions Chart. This will be administered by providing the opposing team with three (3) points at the start of each set (i.e. the beginning score of the set will be 3-0 for the opposing team).

NO SIDE SWITCHING BETWEEN SETS FOR ALL OVA EVENTS

The 25/26 season will adopt and expand the 24/25 Convention Centre pilot to no side switching in-between sets for **ALL** regular season events in addition to the Convention Centre and Ontario Championship events.

- If the head referee determines there is a clear advantage on one side, then a side switch will take place in between sets for that court. The head referee will make the decision at the start of the day as to which courts in the venue (if any) will require a side switch to maintain consistency throughout the day for all teams.
 - Any side switching decision must be made before the start of the match. A side switching request mid match will not be accepted unless there was a change to the venue's structure.

ASSISTANT COACHES ON TEAM BENCH

Assistant Coaches may stand between rallies (not during play) and move along the bench area or change seating positions. There is no restriction on the number of Assistant Coaches that can stand in between rallies.

STAFF PERMITTED ON TEAM BENCH

All individuals who sit on the bench at an OVA sanctioned event **must have** an approved Head Coach or Assistant Coach role in MRS.

- **Individuals who do not have an approved coach role in MRS are not eligible to be listed on an OVA event scoresheet or sit on the bench. Ineligible individuals will be fined \$150 per occurrence and match results may be forfeited.**

COACHES AND TEAM STAFF ATTIRE

All Coaches and team staff should follow the dress guidelines below during all matches:

- Must be dressed to represent their team in a professional manner
- Secure shoes (including both covered toe and heel straps) are encouraged for any team personnel who are on the sport court for both warm up and match play
- Hats are permitted

These guidelines are strongly recommended for anyone acting as a line judge or score keeper during OVA sanctioned events.

SPIRIT OF THE RULES CLAUSE

The Ontario Volleyball Association is committed to providing a fair, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate competition environment for all participants. While our rules and eligibility criteria are designed to guide participation, they cannot account for every possible scenario.

- Should a team, individual, or club act in a manner that complies with the letter of the rules but is clearly contrary to the spirit and intent of those rules—particularly where such actions compromise fair play or the developmental integrity of the competition—the OVA reserves the right to conduct a review.
- In such cases, a Competition Review Panel will be convened to assess the situation. This panel will consider the broader context, the intent behind the actions, and the impact on the competition. The panel's decision will be final and may result in corrective actions, including but not limited to reclassification, disqualification, or eligibility restrictions, as deemed appropriate.
- All participants are expected to uphold not only the rules but the values of sportsmanship, respect, and equitable competition.

YOUTH SITTING VOLLEYBALL PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP

OVA is launching a Youth Sitting Volleyball Provincial Championship during the Ontario Championships in April 2026. Open to coed athletes born 2008–2012 (14U–18U), this first-of-its-kind Canadian event promotes inclusion and awareness.

Teams must include athletes with a classified disability but may also roster able-bodied players. Full details, including registration, format, and rules, will be released in January 2026.

Clubs are encouraged to start sitting volleyball sessions this fall to build interest.

ADMINISTRATION

FEBRUARY 1ST ROSTER LOCK CLARIFICATION

- All athletes, coaches and team staff must be added to a team's official roster in MRS prior to their **first Regular Season OVA sanctioned event**. It is the team's responsibility to ensure the roster in MRS matches the roster sticker for every OVA sanctioned event (Regular Season & the Ontario Championships).
 - If a team has an athlete, coach or team staff on the bench at an OVA sanctioned event that is not a full member in MRS or not on the team roster in MRS; the team will be sanctioned as per the OVA sanction chart which also can result in forfeited matches due to an ineligible person on the scoresheet.
- February 1, 2026, at 11:59pm is the official roster lock in MRS which means no new players, coaches or team staff can be added after that time.
 - Roster change requests (After February 1st) for coaches/athletes who are already in MRS and registered with your club will be reviewed on a case-by-case scenario. All approved roster change requests will be subject to a \$50+hst fee per change.
 - It is strongly recommended for teams to add extra players to their roster prior to the roster lock utilizing all 14 spots in case of injuries. This way, a team can just cross off those players not attending the Ontario Championships at coach check-in.
- Players Moving Up an Age Category
 - Youth teams may use a maximum of Five (non-roster) lower age players (from that same Club) in an OVA competition between Nov 1, 2025 – Feb 1, 2026, and a maximum of two (non-roster) between February 2, 2026 – March 29, 2026. The names of the players moving up are to be bracketed on the score sheets.
 - Underage athletes joining a team for a one-off event before OR after the roster lock deadline (REGULAR SEASON ONLY) do not need to be added to the team's official roster in MRS as the athlete would already be registered with the club in MRS on their own team. The names of the players moving up are to be bracketed on the score sheets.
 - Unlimited lateral movement will end on February 2nd, 2026, as a team's roster is locked as of 11:59pm on February 1, 2026.

OVA CLUB FEE

- The OVA Club fee has been increased to \$450
- The What's New 2.0 released in mid August will have further clarification around tournament and membership fees.

ONTARIO CHAMPIONSHIP REGISTRATION DEADLINE

- The 2026 Ontario Championship Deadline has moved up to Sunday December 7th at 11:59pm.

Submission process for 6v6 and TLS Self-Declare Events:

It is each team's responsibility to complete the self-declare form as OVA staff will not be sending out the link for each event. The link can be found in the What's New Document, Youth Competitions Manual and under each event's page on the OVA website under "Upcoming Indoor Events"

- 6v6G, TLSG & TLSB Self-declare Cognito Form Link can be found [HERE](#) for the 2025/2026 Season.
- Teams entering their first event without submitting a self-declare form will be placed in the lowest tier. If a team has already competed in an event in the age group and does not complete a self-declare submission, they will be placed in the same tier as their previous event.
- If there are multiple submissions for a team for a specific event, the most recent submission will be used.

Self-Declare Submission Deadlines	
6v6 Girls Provincial Cup	October 19, 2025
6v6 Girls Challenge Cup	November 30, 2025
6v6 Girls McGregor Cup	January 11, 2026

6v6 Girls Bugarski Cup	February 1, 2026
TLS Girls Provincial Cup	October 5, 2025
TLS Girls Challenge Cup	November 16, 2025
TLS Boys Provincial Cup	October 12, 2025
TLS Boys Challenge Cup	November 23, 2025

REGISTRATION FOR “WEEKENDS” WILL CONTINUE FOR THE 2025-2026 SEASON

To accommodate the continued growth in division sizes and our facility needs, the OVA will be increasing the number of events that register for the weekend as opposed to a specific date. Teams will be assigned to a specific day on the weekend once the team splits have been posted. Team Splits are posted on the OVA website once the event registration deadline closes AND the results from the most recent event have been received to complete the realignment.

- These “Weekend Registrations” are identified in the OVA Calendar. Please click [HERE](#) to view the OVA Calendar.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

REMINDER - ALL Athletes, Coaches and Club Personnel must register in the OVA Membership Registration System (MRS) prior to participating in any OVA or Club activity (including tryouts). This is necessary to ensure compliance with provincial concussion legislation (Rowan’s Law) and to sign off on the online waivers of liability prior to participating in any OVA related activities.

- If a team has an athlete, coach or team staff on the bench at an OVA sanctioned event that is not a full member in MRS or not on the team roster in MRS; the team will be sanctioned as per the OVA sanction chart which also can result in forfeited matches due to an ineligible person on the scoresheet.
- A Tryout Player role of \$0 is in the system so that players are not required to pay for a membership prior to being selected to a team.
 - Players who are selected for the team will then have to upgrade to a paid membership prior to attending Club practices or if Clubs wish to pay for the full membership for the athlete, they can do so while creating their Club teams and adding players to those teams.
 - Clubs must ensure that athletes and/or parents/guardians show proof of MRS registration on the first night of tryouts for a club via smartphone screen or paper print out.
 - The Early Re-signed and Re-signed athletes will be responsible for registration prior to attending Club practices.

Club coaches must also be registered in MRS prior to running tryouts, practices, etc. All individuals must sign into MRS and register to sign off on Rowan’s Law education and waivers. Once again, if Clubs wish to pay the full membership of their coaches and other club staff, Coaches and Club staff can register as a volunteer (\$0 fee) and then Club admins can pay Club staff membership fees when adding team staff to each team.

TRAVEL EXPECTATIONS FOR OVA REGULAR SEASON TOURNAMENTS

- To create a competition stream that provides competitively balanced matches along with serving the entire province of Ontario, travel is required for events.
- The Youth Competitions team keeps track of all KMs travelled by each team for OVA sanctioned events throughout the season. This data comes into play as one of the criteria when creating the team splits (i.e. proximity to the venue along with past travel).
- All teams across the province should expect to make at least one 400+km (one-way) trip for a regular season event whether you are a Trillium or Premier team at each age group you are participating in. This means if you are a 15UB team playing in the 15UB and 16UB age groups, you can expect to make a big trip at 15UB AND 16UB as each age group is treated separately. Greater Toronto Area (GTA) teams typically do

not see more than one of these larger regular season trips per season in each age group. The OVA will take turns between GTA teams (when possible) filling in these satellite tournament locations due to KM tracking.

VC NATIONAL COMPETITIONS - UNIFORM REGULATIONS

- As per rule 4.3.3 of the Volleyball Canada Rulebook: *“Players' jerseys must be numbered from 1 to 99”*.
- Jerseys identifying players as “O” or “OO” are not permitted at National Competitions.

FIRST AID KIT AND SUPPLIES

- Medical supplies or on-site medics are not provided for regular season OVA events. Coaches/teams must have their own First Aid kits and/or supplies.
 - The only regular season events that provide this service are the EY Centre, International Centre, Niagara Falls Convention Centre and Grand Prix events.

KING & QUEEN OF THE BEACH TOURNAMENTS

After a successful pilot last season, the King & Queen of the Beach format will be regularly offered in 2025–26. These events allow athletes to register as individuals and compete in a rotating format, playing with and against a variety of partners. The athlete with the most wins — regardless of who they’re paired with — is crowned King or Queen of the Beach. This format supports competition and adaptability, helps athletes expand their network and potentially discover future partners — all while staying active in the sand through the winter.