

Southern Region USAV – “Ghost Player” Policy

To allow more opportunities for our members to participate if their number of available rostered players is reduced to FIVE players (due to Covid, injury, or absenteeism), the Southern Region of USA Volleyball has instituted a policy to allow a team to play with FIVE players, with the following stipulations:

- This policy can ONLY be used WITHIN THE SOUTHERN REGION (cannot be used out-of-region).
- This policy CANNOT be implemented for a team competing in a Junior National Qualifier, or any other tournament where the team is competing for a bid to a Junior National Championship (or US Opens for Adults).
- Wins earned by a team playing with a Ghost player may NOT be used towards their Southern Region Ranking.
- **Use of this policy is at the sole discretion of the tournament director.** Tournament directors should clearly communicate whether this policy will be used in any pre-tournament meetings, tournament manuals, and any other pre-tournament communications with teams.
- This policy may ONLY be implemented when a team’s available players are reduced to FIVE players. If a team is reduced to LESS than five players, that team will be considered an “Incomplete Team” as defined by USAV.
- **A Ghost CANNOT replace an expelled or disqualified player.** If a team’s number of available players is reduced to less than SIX players due to an expulsion or disqualification, that team will be considered an “Incomplete Team” as defined by USAV.

Application:

- Teams may play with a maximum of one Ghost player. If a team starts with 5 players, the 6th player must be entered as "G" (for Ghost) on the line up sheet.
- This “Ghost position” must be maintained throughout the rotation. For example, as the “Ghost” position rotates across the front row (the Ghost is in position 2, 3, or 4), the team will only have TWO front row players that may legally attack or block (on or in front of the attack line) as defined by USAV rules governing attacking or blocking the ball.
- When it is the Ghost player's turn to serve, the team will immediately lose that term of service WITHOUT A POINT to the receiving team.

For example:

- The Score is 10-10.
 - Team A (a full team) is serving with #5 in right front.
 - Team B (a team with a Ghost currently in the right front position) is receiving.
 - Team B wins the rally, and the score is now 11-10 (11 serving 10).
 - Team B rotates, since the Ghost can't serve, they immediately lose their term of service (BUT NOT A POINT) to Team A (Team B ONLY LOSES THE TERM OF SERVICE, NOT A POINT)
 - Team A now rotates and #5 moves to the serving position. The score is still 10-11 (10 serving 11)...no point was awarded to Team A with the loss of service for the Ghost player.
 - The exit score of the Ghost player shall always be only one (1) more than the previous player’s exit score.
 - The exit score of the opposing team’s serving position that follows the Ghost’s service position on the other team COULD potentially be the same as their previous server’s exit score (if they do not score in that rally).
- Teams playing with a Ghost are eligible for tournament playoffs (excluding JNQ’s or other bid tournaments where this policy cannot not be implemented).
 - A Ghost player may be substituted for an injured player (as an exceptional substitution) **IF AND ONLY IF** there are no other available substitutes (legal OR exceptional) on the bench. The normal injury time-out is allowed prior to substituting a Ghost for the injured player. (*NOTE* - If an injured player is replaced by a Ghost Player, the rules for exceptional substitution as defined by USAV apply and the injured player is OUT FOR THE MATCH).
 - If a LEGAL substitute (for a team that either started a set with FIVE players or was reduced to five players due to an injury and a Ghost was used to replace the injured player) should become available after that set has begun (or after the injury Ghost replacement occurred), the team MUST replace the Ghost with that LEGAL substitute. (*NOTE* - If a team has used all twelve of their substitutions, this replacement is STILL allowed as the Ghost position MUST be filled if a legal substitute becomes available.