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1. Introduction

The target audience for this document is English speaking referees who will be refereeing in the indoor volleyball competition of the Dutch Volleyball Association (Nevobo).

A brief overview of the pyramid structure of the indoor volleyball competition is shown in Table 1 on the right side of this page.

The Nevobo uses its own Official Volleyball Rules of the Game (written in Dutch) for its competition.

Generally, two sets of rules are used in the Dutch competition:

1. *Eredivisie and Superdivisie*. The set of rules in these levels are practically the same compared with FIVB Rules.
2. *Topdivisie and lower levels* (highlighted in red in Table 1). The set of rules in these levels are significantly different compared with FIVB.

The assumption is made that you are familiar with the FIVB Rules of the Game.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide an overview of the differences between the *Topdivisie* Rules compared with the FIVB Rules.

This English overview should help you understand the *Topdivisie* Rules more easily.

Table 1. Indoor volleyball competition pyramid* structure of Nevobo

National levels
Eredivisie*
Superdivisie
Topdivisie
1 ^e divisie
2 ^e divisie
Regional levels
3 ^e divisie
Promotieklasse
1 ^e klasse
2 ^e klasse
3 ^e klasse
4 ^e klasse
5 ^e klasse
6 ^e klasse

*Eredivisie teams are exempt from relegation to Superdivisie

2. Most important differences: FIVB vs Topdivisie

(In case of any discrepancy between the Dutch Official Volleyball Rules and the English overview of the *Topdivisie* Rules in this document, the Dutch documentation will prevail).

Subject + Rule	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
To win the match 6.3	<p>The match is won by the team that wins three sets.</p> <p>In the case of a 2-2 tie, the deciding 5th set is played to 15 points with a minimum lead of 2 points.</p> <p>(Possible results: 3-0, 3-1, 3-2)</p>	<p><u>Addition:</u> a minimum of 4 sets will be played in Competition matches.</p> <p>(Possible results: 4-0, 3-1, 3-2)</p>
The toss 7.1	<p>- Before the match, the 1st referee carries out a toss to decide upon the first service and the sides of the court in the first set.</p> <p>The toss is taken in the presence of the two team captains.</p> <p>The winner of the toss chooses:</p> <p>EITHER the right to serve or to receive the service, OR the side of the court.</p> <p>The loser takes the remaining choice.</p> <p>- If a deciding set is to be played, a new toss will be carried out.</p>	<p>- Before the match, there is no 'coin' toss.</p> <p>The "toss" is taken in the presence of the two team captains.</p> <p>the team captain of the away team chooses:</p> <p>EITHER the right to serve or to receive the service, OR the side of the court</p> <p>The team captain of the home team takes the remaining choice.</p> <p>- If a deciding set is to be played: the team captain of the home team has the first choice; the team captain of the away team takes the remaining choice.</p>
Ball retrieval system 3.3	For FIVB, World and Official Competitions, five balls shall be used.	1 ball in play + 1 reserve ball.

Subject + Rule	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
Location of the team 4.2.1	The players not in play should either sit on their team bench or be in their warm-up area. The coach and other team members sit on the bench, but may temporarily leave it.	<p>Addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The players not in play and the staff members are also permitted to stand near their team bench in the free zone, but not in the substitution zone. - If advertisement boards are positioned in front of the team benches, the players not in play and the staff members (except the coach) must remain behind the advertisement boards.
5.2.3.2 Location of coach on the bench	During the match, the coach: sits on the team bench nearest to the scorer, but may leave it;	ANY team member may sit on ANY PLACE on the team bench.
7.2.3 Playing uniform during official warm-up session	For FIVB, World and Official Competitions, all players must wear playing uniform for the complete Protocol and warm up.	During the warm-up period at the net, players may still wear warm up shirts. In that case, the referee must be given the opportunity to check the shirt numbers before the start of the match.
Ball crossing the net 10.1.2	The ball, coming from the first hit of the team, that has crossed the net plane to the opponent's free zone totally or partly through the external space, may be played back, within the team hits.	Any ball that has crossed the net plane to the opponent's free zone totally or partly through the external space, may NOT be played back. This is considered a fault immediately.
Responsibilities 2 nd referee 24.3.2.8	During the match, he/she decides, whistles and signals: [...] the served ball, the 2nd and the 3rd hit passing over or outside the antenna on his/ her side of the court.	During the match, he/she decides, whistles and signals: [...] the served ball, the 1st , the 2nd and the 3rd hit passing over or outside the antenna on his/ her side of the court.

Subject + Rule	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
Limitation of substitutions 15.6.1 + 15.6.2	<p>(Each team may request a maximum of six substitutions per set).</p> <p>A player of the starting line-up may leave the game, but only once in a set, and re-enter, but only once in a set, and only to his/her previous position in the line-up.</p> <p>A substitute player may enter the game in place of a player of the starting line-up, but only once per set, and he/she can only be substituted by the same starting player.</p>	<p>(Each team may request a maximum of six substitutions per set).</p> <p>A player of the starting line-up may leave the game, but only once in a set, and re-enter, but only once in a set, and only to his/her previous position in the line-up.</p> <p>When a substitute player has entered the game in place of a player of the starting line-up, he/she can only be substituted by the same starting player. However, in the same set, the substitute player may re-enter the game for any player of the starting line-up. <i>(In other words, the substitute player can enter the game more than once per set).</i></p> <p>A substitute player who is substituted by the starting player cannot re-enter the game immediately during the same interruption. (There must be a completed rally between two separate substitution requests by the same team).</p> <p>(This is best explained through examples. See Appendix A for examples of legal and illegal substitutions in Topdivisie)</p>
Protest 5.1.2.1 + 27.2.3.2	<p>[...] If the game captain does not agree with the explanation of the 1st referee, he/she may choose to protest against such decision and immediately indicates to the 1st referee that he/she reserves the right to record an official protest on the score sheet at the end of the match;</p> <p>in the case of protest, with the previous authorization of the 1st referee, the scorer writes or permits the team/game captain to write on the score sheet a statement on the incident being protested;</p>	<p>In Superdivisie and lower levels: teams do not have the right to protest.</p> <p>The team/game captain has no right to record an official protest on the score sheet.</p>

3. Other noteworthy differences: FIVB vs Topdivisie

Rule + subject	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
Warm-up during time-outs 4.2.3.2	Players not in play may warm-up without balls as follows: during time-outs: in the free zone behind their court.	<u>Addition:</u> during time-outs: the players not in play may also warm-up within their own court without balls.
Warm-up during set intervals 4.2.4	During set intervals, players may warm-up using balls within their own free zone.	During set intervals, players may warm-up using balls within their own playing area (i.e. including their own court). .
Number of players' jerseys 4.3.3	Players' jerseys must be numbered from 1 to 20. In FIVB, World and Official Competitions for Seniors, where larger playing squads are used, numbers may be extended.	Players' jerseys must be numbered from 1 to 999.
Team captain 4.3.4	The team captain must have on his/her jersey a stripe of 8 x 2 cm underlining the number on the chest.	The stripe underlining the number on the chest of the team captain is NOT mandatory.
Playing uniform during official warm-up session 7.2.3	For FIVB, World and Official Competitions, all players must wear playing uniform for the complete Protocol and warm up.	During the warm-up period at the net, players may still wear warm up shirts. In that case, the referee must be given the opportunity to check the shirt numbers before the start of the match.

Rule + subject	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
Execution of the service 12.4.3	At the moment of the service hit or take-off for a jump service, the server must not touch the court (the end line included) or the floor outside the service zone.	<p>(In some sports halls you might encounter playing areas with limited free zone around the playing court. There is a special rule concerning the execution of the service.)</p> <p><u>Addition</u>: if the free zone behind the endline is less than 2 meters, the server is permitted to touch the court with one foot at the moment of the service hit or take-off for a jump service.</p> <p>In case the depth of the service zone behind the endline of only one of the two courts is insufficient (less than 2 m), this rule only applies at the side of the court where the depth of the service zone behind the endline is insufficient.</p>
Time-out duration 15.4.1	All requested time-outs last for 30 seconds.	<p>Time-outs last for 30 seconds, or less, if the requesting team and the officials require less time.</p> <p>If the requesting team wishes to end the time-out before the 30 seconds have elapsed, they must signal this to the 2nd referee, who will in turn blow the whistle to signal the end of the time-out.</p>
Location during time-out 15.4.2	During all time-outs, the players in play must go to the free zone near their bench.	<p>During all time-outs, the players are not required to go to the free zone near their bench.</p> <p>They may choose to stay anywhere within their own playing area (i.e. including their own court).</p>

Rule + subject	FIVB Rules	Explanation/overview of modified rule in Topdivisie and lower levels
Exceptional substitution and Libero 15.7	(no equivalent FIVB rule) A Libero can never become a regular player.	<p>There is one special case where a Libero can become a regular player to prevent a team from becoming incomplete.</p> <p>a) Consider a team that consists of 6 regular players, and 1 or 2 Liberos.</p> <p>If this team would become incomplete due to an injury of a regular player, the Libero may be substituted into the game for the injured player. (The Libero becomes a regular player for the remainder of the match).</p> <p>b) Consider a team that consists of 7 regular players, and 1 or 2 Liberos. And consider the number of available regular players is reduced to 6 due to the sanction expulsion or disqualification.</p> <p>If this team becomes incomplete due to an injury of a regular player, the Libero may NOT be substituted into the game for the injured player.</p>
Intervals 18.1	An interval is the time between sets. All intervals last three minutes.	<p>The intervals last 3 minutes, or less if both teams and the officials require less time.</p> <p>As soon as both teams are ready to play (the starting players are lined up along the sideline or endline) and the officials are ready to resume the match, the next set can begin.</p>
Libero replacements 19.3.2.8	Libero replacements must be recorded in the Libero Control Sheet (if one is used) or on the electronic score sheet.	Libero replacements are not recorded.
Line judges 29	Two or four line judges are used.	There are no line judges.

Appendix A – Examples of legal and illegal substitutions in *Topdivisie* and lower levels

In all examples, assume that:

- the starting line-up consists of players #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6.
- the substitute players are #7, #8, #9

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
in #7, out #6 (completed rally) in #6, out #7 (completed rally) in #7, out #6 (completed rally) in #6, out #7 (completed rally) in #8, out #6 (completed rally) in #6, out #8	in #9, out #2 (completed rally) in #2, out #9 (completed rally) in #9, out #3 (completed rally) in #3, out #9 (completed rally) in #9, out #4 (completed rally) in #4, out #9	in #8, out #5 (completed rally) in #5, out #1	in #8, out #5 (completed rally) in #7, out #8	in #9, out #2 (completed rally) in #2, out #9 (completed rally) in #9, out #3 (completed rally) in #3, out #9 (during the same interruption) in #9, out #4
These are all legal substitutions. (A player of the starting line-up may leave the game more than once in a set)	These are all legal substitutions. (in the same set, the substitute player may re-enter the game for any player of the starting line-up)	This is an illegal substitution . (A player of the starting line-up can re-enter the game, but only to his/her previous position in the line-up.)	This is an illegal substitution . (When a substitute player has entered the game in place of a player of the starting line-up, he/she can only be substituted by the same starting player.)	This is an improper request . (There must be a completed rally between two separate substitution requests by the same team).

Appendix B – Brief overview - Protocol before the match in *Topdivisie* and lower levels.

Time	Actions	Remark
No later than -30'00"	Referees present in playing area.	
No later than -16'00"	Referees check the balls. Referees check the height of the net.	
-15'00"	Referees line up* on either side of the net post. 1 st referee whistles. Toss with both team captains.	*(From the point of view of the scorer): 1 st referee on the left side, 2 nd referee on the right side.
-14'00"	1 st referee whistles for start of warm-up. Teams warm-up at the net.	Players may wear warm-up shirt (instead of playing uniform) during warm-up at the net.
-04'00"	1 st referee whistles for end of warm-up.	Coach gives line-up sheet to the 2 nd referee or the scorer.
-03'00"	Referees line up on either side of the net post. 1 st referee whistles. Players move along the net to shake hands (fair play).	The referees also participate with the handshakes with the players.
-01'00"	1 st referee whistles to give permission to the players of the starting line-up to enter the playing court.	The starting players line up along the sideline, until they are given permission to enter the playing court.
00'00"	Start match.	