

## Libero

### **Experimental State Associations: Alabama, Florida, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin**

#### WHAT IS THE LIBERO AND WHY CONSIDER IT FOR HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL?

The libero (*lee-bah-ro*) position, which had been in use before 2002 in international and club play, was designed to add excitement to the game of volleyball and potentially raise the level of play. The libero was first introduced in international play as a way to keep a good defender on the floor, as only six substitutions were allowed. In international and club play, the libero does not serve.

The libero player is an option that may be exercised by one or both teams in the match. The use of the libero does not affect substitution or entries on the opposing team.

The libero wears a uniform that contrasts with his/her teammates' uniforms, and is allowed to replace any player in the back without counting as a substitution.

The libero requires an additional statistician who uses a tracking sheet to record his/her statistics. Statistics are separate because playing limitations differ from other player on the court.

The libero is intended to be a player who specializes in defense and service reception. When the libero enters the match, the entry is not considered one of the allowed team substitutions. When a libero replaces a back-row player, it is called a "replacement" rather than a substitution. The number of replacements is unlimited, and the libero can replace any back-row player except the player who is currently serving. That means the libero can replace any number of teammates in the same game.

A different libero can be designated for each game, but the designation must be made on the lineup sheet when it is submitted before the game. If no libero is used in a game, the team is still restricted to the team substitutions that the rules allow.

Libero players are used at the collegiate level and USA Volleyball.

#### LIBERO UNIFORM

- The libero must wear a uniform shirt or jersey that is in distinct contrast to shirts worn by other members of the team. The style and trim of the libero's shirt or jersey may differ from her teammates', but her shorts must be identical to her teammates.
- The libero uniform shirt must have a legal number (*not worn by any teammate*) as prescribed by NFHS volleyball rules (*Rule 4, Section 2*). Duplicate jersey numbers may not be worn.

### TRACKING THE LIBERO

- Each school is responsible for supplying a person to track the libero replacements to ensure that: 1) once the libero is replaced, at least one serve must take place before the libero can replace another player; and 2) when the libero leaves the court, the player replacing the libero must be the same player who the libero replaced when she last entered the game. This will be tracked on a separate form (*libero tracking sheet*)

### THE SPECIFIC RULES FOR THE LIBERO PLAYER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- A libero may be designated for each game.
- If a libero is designated for a game, the libero's number must be recorded on the lineup sheet for that game. If a libero has not been listed on the lineup sheet for a game, the team may not use a libero in that game. The libero may be designated as the playing captain.
- The libero may be used as an exceptional substitution for an injured player if no other legal substitutes are available. When no longer playing as a libero, that player must wear the same uniform as her teammates, and the team continues play with no libero player.
- The libero cannot be used as a substitute for a disqualified teammate. If the libero is disqualified while playing, the player whom she replaced must replace her. The team continues play with no libero player.
- The libero can play as a non-libero in subsequent games. The player must wear the same uniform as her teammates.

### LIBERO PLAYING ACTIONS

- The libero is restricted to performing as a back-row player and is not allowed to complete an attack hit from anywhere (*including playing court and free zone*) if, at the moment of contact, the ball is entirely above the top of the net.
- The libero cannot serve, block or attempt to block unless designated as part of the NFHS experiment.
- If a libero sets the ball using overhand finger action while in the attack zone, any teammate who attacks that ball while it is above the height of the net is an illegal attacker.

### LIBERO REPLACEMENTS

- The libero is allowed to replace any player in a back-row position.

Replacements involving the libero are not counted as regular substitutions. These replacements are unlimited, but there must be a rally (*which can include a playover*) between two libero replacements.

The player whom the libero replaced can only replace the libero.

Libero replacements may take place only after the end of a rally or at the start of each game after the umpire has checked the starting lineup, as well as any time the ball is out of play and before the whistle for service.

A libero and the player replaced by the libero may enter or leave the court only by the sideline in front of the libero's team bench between the attack line and the end line. It is important for the libero exchange and substitutions to be easily distinguished from each other.

- When a team is making both a libero replacement and a substitution for the player involved in the libero exchange, the following protocol should be observed: > The player whom the libero replaced must step onto the court between the attack line and the end line and make the exchange with the libero. > The substitute must enter the sub zone and wait at the sideline until the player replacing the libero enters the court and moves to where the substitute is waiting in the sub zone. The substitution then occurs pursuant to normal substitution procedures (*players await authorization by umpire before making the switch*).

#### REDESIGNATION OF A NEW LIBERO WHEN THE LIBERO IS INJURED

- If the libero is injured and cannot continue play, she must first be replaced by the player whom she replaced. Then, a new libero can be redesignated using the following criteria:
  - > Redesignation does not need to occur immediately after the injury and replacement.
  - > When redesignation does occur, any substitution may be redesignated as libero for an injured libero. The injured libero cannot play in the remainder of that game.
  - > The player redesignated as the libero must follow the libero uniform rule and must remain the libero for the rest of the game. The redesignated libero's uniform must have a unique number (*not worn by any teammate*), but not necessarily the same number with which the player started the match.

Several states have asked to experiment with the libero. The NFHS Volleyball Questionnaire will ask the opinion of each participating state association. The committee is also asking each experimental state to provide its opinion on the impact of the libero player on high school volleyball.