



Libero Case Book

Designating the libero

- 13.1 SITUATION A.** Team R's lineup does not list a libero for game 1. **RULING:** A team does not need to list nor use a libero in a game. Preventive officiating dictates that the officials should check with the coach to ensure that s/he does not wish to use a libero for that game.
- 13.1 SITUATION B.** Team R designated #5 as libero in game 1 and turns in a lineup for game 2 listing #12 as libero. **RULING:** Legal.
- 13.1 SITUATION C.** Team R has designated #5 as libero for game 1. In the middle of game 1, a different player wearing a libero uniform replaces a player on the court. **RULING:** Illegal libero replacement. Unnecessary delay is assessed to Team R if the infraction is spotted before the contact of the next serve. After that, illegal alignment is called and a loss of rally is assessed. Barring injury and libero redesignation, only one player may play as libero in any game.

Uniform

- 13.2 SITUATION A.** Team S's team uniform top is black. The libero jersey is: (a) navy, (b) royal blue, (c) light green, (d) hunter green, (e) dark maroon, (f) white, (g) yellow. **RULING:** (a), (b), (d), and (e) Illegal. The libero uniform color does not sufficiently contrast that of the team uniform. The libero cannot play with that uniform. (c), (f), and (g) Legal.
- 13.2 SITUATION B.** Team S's team uniform top is ½ red and ½ white. The libero jersey is: (a) red, (b) white, (c) ½ white and ½ red, (d) yellow. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (c) Illegal. If any color on the team uniform top comprises more than 25% of the uniform (excluding sleeves, collars, and trim), then that color cannot be a primary color of the libero uniform top. (d) Legal.
- 13.2 SITUATION C.** Team S's team uniform is a white, short sleeve, v-neck shirt and blue shorts. The libero jersey has: (a) a red, short sleeve shirt, (b) a green, long sleeve shirt, (c) red shorts, (d) a black, crew neck T-shirt, (e) slightly lighter blue shorts, (f) no number, (g) number 99, (h) buttons on the top, (i) a beer company logo on the back. **RULING:** (c) Illegal. The shorts must be of similar color to the team's shorts. (h) Illegal. Buttons are not allowed on any uniform top. (i) Illegal. Logos must be appropriate for the high school environment. (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), and (g) Legal. Uniform styles may differ between libero and team jerseys. Numbers are not required, but if used must be legal numbers.
- 13.2 SITUATION D.** Team R's libero collides with another player and gets a lot of blood on his/her uniform. The referee (a) allows the libero to play in the bloody uniform, (b) requires the libero to be replaced so that s/he can get a new uniform, (c) allows the libero a reasonable amount of time to change jerseys as part of an injury timeout, (d) allows the libero to play in his regular team jersey, (e) allows the libero to switch jerseys with another libero on the bench, (f) allows the libero to switch to a uniform that has another player's number. **RULING:** (a), (b), and (d) Improper procedure. (c) and (e) Proper procedure. (f) The libero cannot use the same number uniform of another player who has played or will play in the match. Other than that, this is allowable. Blood issues should be administered as injury timeouts with a player being given a reasonable amount of time to change uniforms before a substitution (or, in the case of the libero, a replacement) is required.
- 13.2 SITUATION E.** Team R's libero in game 1 wore a black jersey top. The team's uniform top is white. The game 2 libero comes out in a red uniform top. **RULING:** Legal. As long as the color and contrast are appropriate, it does not matter if the libero uniform top color changes between games.
- 13.2 SITUATION F.** Underneath Team R's libero jersey is a white, crew neck T-shirt that is visible. The libero is wearing (a) a red "pinny" vest that has small holes in it, (b) a blue, v-neck jersey that allows the white T-shirt to show above the v-neck. **RULING:** Legal. As long as the libero top's color and contrast are appropriate, limited visibility of an undergarment is allowable and not subject to the same scrutiny as are regular team uniform tops.

Libero replacements

- 13.3 SITUATION A.** The libero replaces: (a) Team R's LB, (b) Team R's RF, (c) Team R's RB, (d) Team S's CB, (e) Team S's RB. **RULING:** (a), (c), and (d) Legal. (b), Illegal. The libero can only replace a back row player. (d) Illegal. The libero cannot replace the current server. If caught before the contact of serve, both (b) and (d) are punished with unnecessary delay. After the contact of serve, illegal alignment and loss of rally are assessed.
- 13.3 SITUATION B.** Team R's libero attempts to replace the CB when the team has used: (a) 17 substitutes, (b) 18 substitutes. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Legal. Libero replacements do not count as substitutions. They are unlimited.
- 13.3 SITUATION C.** Team R's libero, who replaced # 12 two rallies earlier, is replaced by #12. Then, during the same dead ball, the libero replaces: (a) #7, (b) #12. **RULING:** (a) Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay. One rally must be played in between libero replacements. (b) Legal. Since the libero was replaced by the same player (#12), this allows a team to immediately "unreplace" the libero when the replacement as if the original replacement did not occur.
- 13.3 SITUATION D.** Team R's #8 replaces the libero. The referee then issues a card to Team R's coach for misconduct. The libero then replaces #3. The card was: (a) a yellow card, (b) a red card. **RULING:** (a) Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay (if detected before the next serve). (b) Legal. A rally must take place between libero replacements. A yellow card does not involve a rally. A red card, however, entails a loss of rally penalty. So, even though the ball has not been served, a rally has occurred and a replacement is allowable.
- 13.3 SITUATION E.** Team R's #8 replaces the libero. After the beckon for serve, the server tosses and drops the ball. The referee indicates a re-serve. The libero then replaces #3. **RULING:** Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay (if detected before the next serve). No replacements may take place immediately following a re-serve call.
- 13.3 SITUATION F.** Team R's #8 replaces the libero. After the contact of the serve, the referee spots a ball from another court on the floor, and whistles for a replay. The libero then replaces #3. **RULING:** Legal. Even though no points were scored, the ball was served and a rally has taken place. Replacements are allowed.
- 13.3 SITUATION G.** Team R's libero is on the court after replacing #12. When the libero rotates to the front row, #7 replaces him/her. **RULING:** Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay (if detected before the next serve). The player the libero replaced must be the player to replace the libero. If the coach wanted #7 to come in to play front row, the proper procedure would be to have #12 replace the libero and then immediately substitute #7 for #12.
- 13.3 SITUATION H.** A libero replacement occurs: (a) at the start of a game before the umpire has verified that team's lineup, (b) before the whistle for serve, (c) after the service whistle but before the contact, (d) after the contact of serve. **RULING:** (a) Incorrect procedure. The umpire should request the libero to leave the court and his/her replacement to return to the court until the umpire has verified the starting lineup. (b) Legal. (c) Incorrect procedure. The replacement should occur before the whistle for serve. For the first offense by a team during a match, the referee should, at the conclusion of the rally, give a verbal warning to the captain. Subsequent offenses by that team warrant unnecessary delay penalties. It is also possible that illegal alignment has occurred if the player involved has not reached a valid position on the floor at the time of contact. (d) Illegal alignment, loss of rally.
- 13.3 SITUATION I.** Team R's libero, who replaced # 12 two rallies earlier, is replaced by #12. Team S immediately calls timeout. At the end of the timeout, Team R's libero replaces #7. **RULING:** (a) Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay. A timeout does not constitute a rally. One rally must be played in between libero replacements. Like substitutions, replacements cannot be made before and after a timeout during the same dead ball.
- 13.3 SITUATION J.** The libero lines up at the end line at the start of the match and participates in the handshakes at the net. The libero then waits off court between the 10' line and end line on the bench side of the court until the umpire verifies the starting lineup. **RULING:** Correct procedure. The libero may participate in the pre-match protocol, but is not required to do so.
- 13.3 SITUATION K.** Team R's libero replaces #8 without waiting at the sideline for the umpire to authorize entry. The umpire requires the two players to wait at the sideline until the libero tracker records the libero replacement. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The libero replacement is done without the intervention of the officials. The players do not need to wait for authorization to perform the exchange.
- 13.3 SITUATION L.** During a timeout, Team R's libero replaces #8. They do not go through the replacement exchange on the sideline. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The players should wait until the end of the timeout before making the exchange in order to ensure that the libero tracker can record the replacement.

Playing actions

- 13.4 SITUATION A.** The libero rotates to LF and is not replaced. The umpire notices this after the referee beckons for serve. **RULING:** Illegal replacement, unnecessary delay (if detected before the next serve; otherwise, illegal alignment) since the officials had to intervene. The libero cannot play in the front row.
- 13.4 SITUATION B.** The libero sends the ball over the net while (a) the ball is completely above the height of the net and the libero is in front of the 10' line, (b) the ball is partially above the height of the net and the libero is in front of the 10' line, (c) the ball is completely above the height of the net and the libero is behind the 10' line, (d) the ball is partially above the height of the net and the libero is behind the 10' line, (e) the ball is completely above the height of the net and the libero jumps from a point outside the court and 7' from the center line extension. **RULING:** (a), (c), and (e) Illegal attack on libero. The libero cannot complete an attack after contacting a ball that is completely above the height of the net, regardless of his/her position on/off the court. The 10' line is considered to extend indefinitely to the sides beyond the court. (b) and (d) Legal.
- 13.4 SITUATION C.** The libero, while near the net, (a) fakes a block, (b) jumps to block an attack by the other team. **RULING:** Illegal block on the libero. Like all back row players, it is illegal for the libero to fake or attempt a block.
- 13.4 SITUATION D.** The libero, while near the net, jumps to save a ball that is completely above the height of the net. The libero does not contact the ball, which is then spiked by the opposition and (a) hits the libero completely above the net height, (b) hits the libero whose hands are partially above the net height, (c) hits the libero whose is completely below the net height, (d) misses the libero. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Illegal block on the libero since the libero, as a back row player, still has a body part above the net. (c) Legal as the team's first hit. Since the contact was completely below the height of the net, in accordance with revised rule 9-5-4, this is not considered a block. (d) Play continues. In (c) and (d), Play continues provided the libero's effort to save the ball was not judged to be an attempted block.
- 13.4 SITUATION E.** The libero, in the front zone, sets a ball that is successfully attacked by his/her teammate who contacted the ball when it was completely above the height of the net. The libero set the ball using: (a) an overhand finger pass, (b) an underhand finger pass, (c) a forearm bump, (d) a fist, (e) the knuckles. **RULING:** (a) Illegal attack (indicate libero after signal #8). (b) – (e) Legal. Only a libero's overhand finger pass is restricted when the libero is in the front zone and a teammate contacts the ball completely above the height of the net. All other passes may be freely used anywhere on the court.
- 13.4 SITUATION F.** Team R's libero digs a ball three feet from the net and six feet off of the ground using an overhand finger pass. A front row teammate then (a) sets a ball that is successfully attacked, (b) dumps a ball that is completely above the height of the net to the opposition's floor, (c) sets a ball that is completely above the net that misses an outside hitter and is blocked in the plane of the net by the opposition, (d) misses the ball, which then goes over the net untouched, (e) bumps the ball over the net. **RULING:** (b) and (c) Illegal attack (signal #8, then indicate libero). The next play after an overhand finger pass from the libero in the front zone cannot be a completed attack on a ball completely above the height of the net — even if unintended. In (c), the legal block completed the attack. (a), (d), and (e) Legal.
- 13.4 SITUATION G.** Team R's libero sets a ball that a teammate successfully attacks when it was completely above the height of the net. The libero used an overhand finger pass after (a) jumping from behind the 10' line but contacting the ball 7' from the net, (b) leaving the ground on, but not over, the 10' line, (c) laying on the ground with his/her feet behind the 10' line and torso in front of the 10' line, (d) with one foot on the ground behind the 10' line and one foot off of the ground in front of the 10' line. **RULING:** (a) Legal. The only consideration here is where the libero's feet were when s/he left the ground. (b) Illegal attack (indicate libero). The libero was leave from behind the 10' line for this to be legal. (c) Illegal attack (indicate libero). The libero was in contact with the floor in front of the 10' line when the overhand finger pass was made. (d) Legal. Since the libero is still in contact with the floor, we only consider the part of the body in contact with the floor, which in this case is behind the 10' line.
- 13.4 SITUATION H.** Team R's libero, while in front of the 10' line, sets a ball that a teammate attacks when it was completely above the height of the net. After the teammate attacks the ball, but before it is blocked or crosses the net, Team S's RF contacts the net. **RULING:** Net foul on Team S. Team R's attack is not considered complete until the ball completely crosses the net untouched or is legally played by the other team. The *potential* illegal attack on a ball set by the libero should not be called until the attack is completed. In this case, the net foul preceded the completion of the attack, and thus is the call that should be made.
- 13.4 SITUATION I.** Team A's libero is on the court after replacing #12. When the libero rotates to the front row, #9 replaces him/her. Team A serves two points, and then loses the next rally. The score is then 10-14, with B#3 serving. The officials then notice the illegal replacement (#9 for L) (a) before the next contact for serve, (b) after the next contact for serve, (c) after Team B serves and loses the next rally. **RULING:** Illegal

replacement. In (a), Team A lost the previous rally, so Team R is not awarded another point. However, the two points scored during Team S's term of service are removed. The score is now 8-14, with B#3 serving. In (b), illegal alignment and loss of rally is assessed against Team A. No points are removed since the service has alternated and the serve has been contacted. The score is now 10-15, with B#3 serving. In (c), no points from Team A's service are removed since the service has alternated and the serve has been contacted. However, the result of the last rally, which Team A won, is changed so that A is penalized with point/loss of rally for illegal alignment, and B retains the service. The score is now 10-15, with B#3 serving. In all cases, the player the libero replaced must be the player to replace the libero.

13.4 SITUATION J. A back from player from Team R, while near the net, jumps to set a ball (as the team's second hit) that is completely above the height of the net. The ball is directed towards a teammate, but is legally contacted first by Team S while it is in the vertical plane of the net. The Team R back row player setting the ball was (a) the libero, (b) not the libero. **RULING:** (a) Illegal attack on the libero. (b) Legal, play on. Since the set was the team's second hit, it was directed towards a teammate, and it was contacted in the vertical plane of the net by the opposition, the back row attack exception comes into play. In this case, for a non-libero player setting the ball, play continues (i.e., no back row attack is warranted). The libero, however, is not eligible for this exception. Any time a libero plays a ball that is completely above the height of the net and it is next contacted (legally) by an opponent, an illegal attack should be called on the libero.

Injury Substitution

13.5 SITUATION A. Team R's libero, after replacing #12, is injured. The coach sends #12 onto the court to replace the libero, but does not designate a new libero. The referee insists that a new libero be redesignated before play continues. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. A new libero may be designated at the coach's discretion any time after the injury occurs. By not redesignating immediately, the current libero would be allowed to return later in the same game.

13.5 SITUATION B. Team R's libero (#1), after replacing #12, is injured. The coach wants #3, who is on the floor as RB, to be designated as the new libero. Player #3 grabs a libero jersey and remains RB. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Before anything else happens, officials must deal with the injury situation. That means that #12 must replace the injured libero. The player to be redesignated as the libero must be on the bench. Therefore, someone on the bench would have to substitute for #3. Once #3 is on the bench, s/he could then be designated the libero, change jerseys, and enter the game, replacing #12, after the next rally. Player #1, the original libero, may not play again in the current game in any capacity, but may play in any later game(s) as the libero or as a regular player.

13.5 SITUATION C. Team R's libero, after replacing #12, is injured. #7 is on the bench after having #10 substitute for him. #12 and #7 are the only players on the bench. The coach wants #12 to be designated as the new libero. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Before anything else happens, officials must deal with the injury situation. That means that #12 must replace the injured libero. The player to be redesignated as the libero must be on the bench. Therefore, #7 could be redesignated as the libero or #7 could substitute for #10, who could then be redesignated as the libero. These are the only two players who could be redesignated as the libero in this game.

13.5 SITUATION D. Team R's libero (#99) is injured. #5, who is on the bench, is to be redesignated as the libero. #5 does not have a libero jersey. **RULING:** #5 cannot play as libero without a jersey that meets the libero uniform rules (Rule 13-2). #5 could simply wear a T-shirt of contrasting color or could even take #99's libero uniform top. If #5 continued to wear the #99 libero uniform in the following game, then #99 could not return to the match as a regular player without Team R being assessed a penalty to change the roster.

Exceptional Substitution

- 13.6 SITUATION A.** Team S's libero is in the game having replaced #8. # 14 is the only other player on the bench. #12 gets injured and cannot continue. #12, #8, and #14 all have played in different positions in the rotation this game. #12 is allowed to enter the game for #8 as an exceptional substitution. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. #12 cannot be used as an exceptional substitution since s/he was replaced by the libero. #14, if able to play, is the only option for an exceptional substitution since the libero is the last option in the exceptional substitution priority list.
- 13.6 SITUATION B.** Team S's libero (#4) is in the game having replaced #8, who is now the only player on the bench. #12 gets injured and cannot continue. #12 is allowed to enter the game for #8 as an exceptional substitution. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. #12 cannot be used as an exceptional substitution since s/he was replaced by the libero. The libero (#4) must be replaced by #12 and then become an exceptional substitution for #8. #4 must also change into a regular team uniform, as s/he is no longer performing as the libero.

Disqualification

- 13.7 SITUATION A.** Team R's libero (#4) has replaced #10. At 15-12 in game 1, Team R's #10 is disqualified from the match. #10 is (a) the only player on the bench, (b) on the bench with #19, who has not played in this game, (c) on the bench with #40, who has played in a different position in the rotation than player #10. **RULING:** (a) and (c) Since exceptional substitutions may not be used for a disqualified player, Team R must play with only five players for the rest of game 1 using a "ghost" spot in the rotation where #10 played. When the "ghost" position rotates to serve, loss of rally will be awarded to the opposition. Team R will be able to field a full team in the next game. (b) As long as Team R has not used all 18 of its permitted substitutions, #19 can legally substitute for #10.
- 13.7 SITUATION B.** Team R's libero (#4) has replaced #10, who is the only player on the bench. At 15-12 in game 1, Team R's #12 is disqualified from the match. #4 is replaced by #10 and then substitutes for #12. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The libero may not be used as an exceptional substitution for a disqualified player. Since #10 must, in an upcoming rotation, replace the libero, there are no substitutes for #12. Team R must play with only five players for the rest of game 1 using a "ghost" spot in the rotation where #12 played. When the "ghost" position rotates to serve, loss of rally will be awarded to the opposition. Team R will be able to field a team for game 2 by not using a libero.
- 13.7 SITUATION C.** Team R's libero (#4) has replaced #10. At 15-12 in game 1, Team R's libero is disqualified from the match. #10 replaces the disqualified libero. #14 asks to be designated as the new libero. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. #10 does immediately replace #4. However, a disqualified libero may not be redesignated. Team R must play without a libero for the duration of game 1. Team R may, however, designate a different libero for game 2.

Assistant Scorekeeper (libero tracker)

- 13.8 SITUATION A.** The host school insists that its scorekeeper can keep score and track the libero. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The libero tracker must be a separate individual. There is potentially too much for one single person to watch and record during dead balls. The libero tracker may, however, also serve as the timer/scoreboard operator.
- 13.8 SITUATION B.** The home team supplies a libero tracker. The umpire informs the tracker that s/he must sit at the scorer's table. **RULING:** Correct procedure. The official libero tracker must be at the scorer's table, not sitting on a team bench. This facilitates communication between the officiating team members.
- 13.8 SITUATION C.** At a tournament, the host school provides a scorer and timer, but not a libero tracker. **RULING:** The timer should also perform the role of libero tracker. If unable to do so, the teams may be asked to supply a tracker. If the teams cannot supply a tracker, neither team may use a libero in that match.
- 13.8 SITUATION D.** At a tournament, the host school provides only a scorer. Both teams insist that their libero trackers should be the official tracker. **RULING:** The home team's tracker shall be the official tracker and shall sit at the scorer's table.
- 13.8 SITUATION E.** During a timeout, the umpire notices that the libero tracker is only recording replacements, not substitutions. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. In order for the libero tracker to know whom the libero is replacing, s/he must also record all substitutions.
- 13.8 SITUATION F.** During a dead ball, the libero tracker notices that Team S's #5 is replacing the libero, who last replaced #12. The tracker immediately notifies the umpire. The umpire, after allowing time for the team

to correct its mistake but before the whistle for serve, whistles for an illegal replacement, shows signal #20 – illegal substitution), and assesses an unnecessary delay penalty against Team R. **RULING:** Correct procedure. Illegal replacement is only called if the officials must intervene to correct the problem.

13.8 SITUATION G. During a dead ball, the libero tracker notices that Team S's #5 is replacing the libero. After a timeout during the same dead ball, Team S's libero replaces #1. The tracker immediately notifies the umpire. The umpire, after allowing time for the team to correct its mistake but before the whistle for serve, whistles for an illegal replacement, shows signal #20 – illegal substitution), and assesses an unnecessary delay penalty against Team R. **RULING:** Correct procedure. Illegal replacement is only called if the officials must intervene to correct the problem.

13.8 SITUATION H. Early in game 1, the libero replaces #5. Later in game #1, the libero replaces #28. The libero tracker notifies the umpire. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The libero may replace any number of players in a given game. Once the libero is on the court after having replaced a player, however, that player must be the one to replace the libero. Once the libero has been on the bench for a rally, the libero can replace any non-serving, back row player.

13.8 SITUATION I. Team S's libero replaces #7. The umpire records the replacement on his/her lineup card. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. The umpire should not record replacements on the lineup card. The libero tracker is the only person that should record this replacement.