



October 15, 2025

NFHS Volleyball Weekly Rule Interpretations

OVERHEAD OBSTRUCTIONS

The recommended minimum height for the area above the court to be clear of any obstructions is 23 feet (or 7 meters). Because high school gyms are not uniform in design and multifunctional in nature, the rules governing playable/nonplayable areas are established as a framework for evaluating facilities.

Officials, during their prematch routine, should inspect the facility for potential playing hazards and determine playable and nonplayable areas including overhead obstructions. Any ground rules established for a particular site should be communicated with the coaches and team captains during the prematch meeting.

SITUATION 1: Playing on the court pictured, Team R contacts the ball and it: (a) strikes the underside of the track on Team R's side of the court and next played by a teammate; (b) strikes the vertical bars of the hand railing around the elevated track on Team R's side of the court and next played by a teammate; (c) lands on the elevated track and becomes motionless; (d) becomes lodged in the rafters on the underside of the track. **RULING:** (a) Play on; (b) and (c) out-of-bounds; (d) replay. **COMMENT:**

The overhead track is an overhead obstruction over a playable area. Team R may continue to play the ball after contact with the underside of the obstruction. When the ball becomes motionless in an overhead obstruction over a playable area a replay is signaled. The side railing of the elevated track is considered the wall and contact to or over the railing is considered out-of-bounds. [2-2, 2-3a, 9-8-1f(3)]



SITUATION 2: Team R contacts the ball and it strikes a large ceiling fan hanging over Team R's side of the court that is: (a) on and circulating; (b) off and stationary. The ball remains on Team R's side of the court and is next played by a teammate. **RULING:** Play on. **COMMENT:** The ceiling fan is an overhead obstruction over a playable area. Team R may continue to play the ball after contact with the obstruction.

SITUATION 3: Team R contacts the ball and it strikes a large ceiling fan that is on and circulating hanging over Team R's side of the court. The ceiling fan sends the ball: (a) over the net to Team S's side of the court; (b) into the bleachers (nonplayable area). **RULING:** Replay. **COMMENT:** Similar to when a player's legitimate effort to legally play the ball, in the judgment of the referee, is affected by a ball becoming motionless on/in an overhead obstruction over a playable area – a ball's movement and trajectory is severely impacted by the circulating ceiling fan therefore a replay is called. [9-8-1f(3)]