



The following items represent changes to the Rules of the Game for the 2024 – 2025 season of play. Each item will be represented in the following fashion:

- Prior year rule terminology
- Updated rule terminology (changes are notated in red)
- Type of Modification and or Rationale

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Chronological changes to 2024 – 25 Rulebook file

1. Updated rule text as below
2. Updated diagrams and official hand signals

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### **Rule 10.1.2 Ball Crossing the Net (2023)**

The ball 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 provided that:

10.1.2.1 the opponent's court is not touched by the player.

10.1.2.2 the ball, when played back, crosses the net plane again totally or partly through the external space on the same side of the court. If not, the ball becomes out. The opponent team may not prevent such action.

### **Rule 10.1.2 Ball Crossing the Net (2024)**

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 provided that:

10.1.2.1 the opponent's court is not touched by the player (**except Rule 11.2.2.1**).

10.1.2.2 the ball, when played back, crosses the net plane again totally or partly through the external space on the same side of the court. If not, the ball becomes out. The opponent team may not prevent such action.

**10.1.2.3 the ball, sent to the opponent's free zone totally or partly through the external space, which has come from the second or third hit of the team, cannot be played back and will be judged as ball OUT the moment it crosses the net plane.**

**Type of Modification:** Clarification

To add clarified wording to the Crossing Space Rule.



### **Rule 12.5 Screening (2023)**

#### **Rule 12.5.1 (2023)**

The players of the serving team must not prevent their opponent, through individual or collective screening, from seeing the service hit and the flight path of the ball.

#### **Rule 12.5.2 (2023)**

A player or group of players of the serving team make(s) a screen by waving arms, jumping, or moving sideways during the execution of the service, or by standing grouped, in order that both the service hit and the flight path of the ball are hidden until the ball reaches the vertical plane of the net. Should either be visible to the receiving team this is not a screen.

#### **Rule 12.5.1 (2024)**

The players of the serving team must not prevent their opponent, through individual or collective screening, from seeing the service hit and the flight path of the ball.

#### **Rule 12.5.2 (2024)**

Any player of the serving team is forbidden to raise hands above the head during service, until the ball has passed beyond the net.

The 1<sup>st</sup> referee is encouraged to educate (advise) a team through the game captain.

**Type of Modification:** ENHANCEMENT of FAIR PLAY and as a safety precaution to update the wording of the Screening Rule.



## Application and Interpretation

With respect to the change in language for Rule 12.5, it is imperative to also fully understand the language contained within the Referee Guidelines and use the two texts synonymously to properly interpret and apply the rule correctly.

The 1<sup>st</sup> referee should pay attention to screening during the execution of the service when a player or group of players of the serving team, (waving arms, jumping / moving sideways, or by standing grouped) prevent the opponent from seeing the service hit and flight path of the ball until the ball crosses the vertical plane of the net.

If the served ball can be seen clearly throughout its path, until it crosses the net to the opponent, **it cannot be considered as a screen.**

Service hit is the actual point of contact. Depending on the type of service methodology, the differential in height values will proportionately impact the probability and potential of a screen.

Referees must be more zealous in taking care of the teams' intentions to create a screen and prevent from the beginning of the game that the teams abuse the screening rule with the excuse of 'tactical strategy.' Therefore, when a team is CLEARLY GROUPED with the intention of screening, or players are with hands **above head height** (they may, however, protect their heads for safety reasons but must not raise their hands above the head), the referee can indicate this to the serving team by:

1. Blowing his / her whistle to separate the players.
2. By verbally advising the team captain.

If the players do not adjust at the direction provided, the first referee **MUST CALL THE SCREEN** after the service. It is necessary that ALL referees apply these instructions from the beginning of the matches, to reverse this trend that affects fair play.

The technical metrics that determine the existence of a fault are only identified in 12.5.1 and have not changed:

- Prevent their opponent from seeing the service hit.
- Prevent their opponent from seeing the flight path of the ball.

If, in the judgment of the first referee, both criteria exist, the referee **MUST CALL THE SCREEN.**

The language adjustment in 12.5.2 reflects an effort to change a systemic issue with respect to Fair Play and Sportsmanship. Specifically, the trend of players (both front and back row) from raising their hands to limit the opposition's ability to see the service hit and / or the flight path of the ball.

As with any change to the rules of the game, the referees must find a tactical balance between education and implementation. From an educational perspective, the following approach should be taken:



1. At the coin toss with the team captains, remind them of the change in language and the responsibility of the participants for the match.
2. Remind the coaches of the change in language and the responsibility of the participants during the match.
3. During the match, observe the teams and make minor corrections prior to the authorization of service:
  - a. Use of whistle and short interjections to get the attention of the participants and if necessary, show them an appropriate positioning of the hands (e.g. on the back of the head).
  - b. In persistent cases through verbal reminder to the captain that the team is not adapting, and they must make a concerted effort to do so.
  - c. In extreme cases where both options 1 and 2 have been exhausted, through the implementation of delay sanctions.
4. Except for option 'c', the interjection of the referee should be quick and concise and if done correctly will not delay the normal resumption of the match in any way.

### Sample Imagery



- The team in question meets the requirements of the adapted rule text.
  - The hands are not above the height of the head but are in a protective position.
  - The grouping of athletes does not create a screen, only increased potential that the technical requirements may be met.
  - The referee should authorize for service without any hesitation.





- The team in question does not meet the requirements of the adapted rule text.
  - The front row players clearly have their hands above their head, thus attempting to inhibit the opposition from seeing the service hit and the flight path of the ball.
  - The grouping of athletes does not create a screen, only increases potential that the technical requirements may be met.
  - The referee, prior to authorizing service, should quickly engage with the athletes and correct this matter.
    - Ideally this will be managed using the whistle.
    - If it isn't corrected, a verbal reminder to the captain would be appropriate.

In summary, it is critical that referees at all levels make a concerted effort to apply the adapted rule text and refereeing instructions from the beginning of every match. Consistent implementation by all referees will facilitate a smoother and quicker transition and will help facilitate the team's adaptation.