

2026 Fall League Rules

Volleyballs

The balls used for the league will be Molten Super Touch for the Middle School League, and Molten Volley-Lite for the Youth League.

Please do not bring outside volleyballs to the warehouse – they are not needed. We will provide 12 warm-up balls on each court for you to warm-up with.

When warm-ups are done, all volleyballs must be placed back in the carts and the carts put in between the team benches. No one else is allowed to use the volleyballs – this includes players who are not playing, siblings, friends, and parents.

Courts

Please note that no one other than players, coaches, officials and the parents who are keeping the score should be on any of the courts.

Siblings

Please make sure that all siblings and small children are under a parent's supervision. We have had trouble in the past with siblings who either cause trouble (lock doors, unroll toilet paper in the bathroom), get lost (causing us to shut down the tournament until they are found), or just get in the way by playing in hallways or on the mezzanine.

All children who are not playing volleyball should be with their parents and carefully supervised.

Uniforms

There are no uniform requirements for the Mizuno Northern Lights Fall League. Players are encouraged to wear shirts that match, except for the libero if a libero is going to be used. Jerseys do not need to have numbers.

Admission cost

\$5.00 admission for all spectators ages 6 & older. Ages 5 & under are free.

Cash and credit cards are accepted. We do not take checks.

Bags

All bags must be taken upstairs and put on a rack. Any team that has bags on the lower level, or on the upper level, not racked will be required to stop play and move their bags.

Outside Food & Concessions

Since teams will be playing two, back-to-back matches, the concession stand will not be open. Teams will be allowed to bring in outside food and beverage as long as they throw away all garbage throughout the day.

All food must be consumed upstairs. If you spill, please clean up after yourselves.

NO COFFEE on the courts. This includes coaches AND parents running the score sheets.

Although food is allowed, bringing large quantities of food into the building is highly discouraged. If there are boxes or cases of food, you may be asked by door security to leave the food in your car.

Live Streaming

Northern Lights is happy to inform you that we have added live streaming capability to all of our courts. This is a pay-per-view service and a small fee will be charged to view the stream.

Because of this, we will no longer allow any person attending a match to live stream their own matches from their phone, iPad or other electronic device. If we see you live streaming, we will kindly ask you to discontinue. If we find that you have continued to live stream, we have the right to ask you to leave the building immediately.

Information about live streaming has been posted on the Northern Lights website under the main menu item "Streaming".

Officials

Mizuno Northern Lights players from the 2025 season will officiate all matches for the league. They will be on the stand as the up Official. There will be no down Officials or line judges. Up Officials will make all the calls for the match.

Parent responsibility: Each team will need to send a parent rep to the scorer's table for each match. There will be a very simple score sheet for one parent to mark off each point that is scored in each game and a blank to put the final score in at the end of the game. The other parent will be asked to use the DAK Score App (easily downloadable on any smart phone) to update the electronic scoreboard.

Coaches: Please check the monitors to verify the match has been entered correctly before you leave. The brackets will update within 2 minutes of your score being entered. If it is not updated, or the results are wrong, please find the site supervisor immediately. They can typically be found in the coaches' room behind court 3.

Start time for matches

Teams will play 2 matches in succession. Start times for the first match will be:

7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am, 1:30pm, 3:30pm, 5:30pm, or 7:30pm

4 team brackets will be played on adjacent courts. Courts 1 & 2 will be paired up for example.

The second match will start 5 minutes after both matches for each bracket's first round have ended. This may be before the top of the hour.

Warm-Ups

Warm-ups for your first match will be at least 10 minutes. Your first match will not start earlier than the start time scheduled. Warm-ups will work more like high school than club. Your first match, the team on top of the bracket match will have the net for 4 minutes, and the bottom team may warm-up with a ball off the court. The second 4 minutes, the net will belong to the bottom team in the bracket, and the top team may ball handle off the court. The last two minutes will be shared serving time.

For your second match, the two courts will use one clock. If the odd court finishes first, they will set their clock for 5 minutes, if the even court finishes first, they will set their clock for 5 minutes. As soon as the other match ends the clock will start. The first two minutes will be for the team that stayed (winner on the odd court, loser on the even court). The second two minutes will be for the team that had to move courts. The last minute is for shared serving. If teams don't want to warm up, play be start as soon as both teams are on the court and ready.

Match Rules

Generally speaking, all rules in this league have been decided with one goal in mind. We are trying to get these young women opportunities to touch the ball and feel successful in their attempts. With rare exception, we have not had anyone abuse the leniency of our rules to gain an unfair advantage and we hope that trend continues, and we don't need to make changes.

These are not USAV, or MSHSL rules, but rather rules to encourage rallies in each point.

Points per set, number of sets, switching sides

We will play 3 sets automatically. The first two sets will be played to 25 points where you **must** win by 2 points. The third set will be played to 15 points and again you must win by 2 points. Teams will **not** switch sides for the 2nd set. The teams will **not** switch at 8 points in the third set.

Substitutions

Substitutions will be unlimited and not monitored. Teams can run like a regular high school team, where certain players sub in for one another, there is a libero, etc... Teams can also sub on the fly, any player for any other player.

Serving

Players are encouraged to serve from behind the service line, or at minimum from a step into the court.

1. Underhand servers may stand anywhere between the baseline and the attack line, with the goal being getting a playable up-and-down serve that the opponent can use to start a rally.
2. Overhand servers stand on or behind the modified 12-and-under service line. This will be enforced by our player refs and there will not be adjustments to it.
3. No foot faults to be enforced. Please see rule 2 for the starting point.

In the 12U division, and the bottom 4 brackets of the middle school division, players will be allowed to serve a maximum of **three** times per **rotation**. If, after three serves, their team retains the serve for a 4th opportunity, the serving team will rotate, and the next server will serve.

Players are allowed to toss the ball multiple times for a great service opportunity (within reason). This means that players are encouraged to serve their first or second toss. But if they have two bad tosses, we do not need them to hit that second bad toss. If they toss the ball, and make no attempt to play the ball, but it contacts their body, this will not be considered a fault, but a bad toss.

Ball Handling & Net / Center-line Violations

Officials have been instructed to be liberal with ball handling calls. Some calls will be made, but we are encouraging players to try and set the ball, so most doubles and lifts will not be called. Gross ball handling errors should still be called. A reminder that the double rule has gone away as long as the ball stays on the same side of the net.

Net violations will be a safety call. If a player enters the other teams playing area, a fault will be called. If not, play on. This does not mean we should be training our athletes to hit the net but does mean they should play until they hear a whistle.

Request to move pools

With over 100 teams in the league, we are constantly receiving requests to move teams from their assigned pool and to make special exceptions for teams. The league has gotten too big to accommodate these requests and as a result, we will no longer be able to adjust the master pool schedule. Where your team falls is where they fall.

We are also very aware that 7:30pm on a Sunday night is not the time most teams want to play volleyball. Our goal is to limit the number of times a team plays at the 7:30pm time. However, it is impossible to predict which teams may move up/down a pool multiple times and end up at the 7:30pm time more than once. For more information on team movement, see below.

Team Movement

The first week of the league (9/6) teams will be split and snake seeded. The potential breakdown of how the Divisions of the league are seeded is below

League	Middle School			Youth			
Division	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4
Number of Teams	16	20	16	16	16	12	16

Example:

In a 16 team division the top 4 seeds are the (1) seed in their respective brackets 1-4. The 5-8 seeds are the (2) seed in their brackets in reverse order so in bracket 1, the 1st seed is the #1 seed overall and the 2nd seed is the #8 seed overall. In bracket 4, the 1st seed is the #4 seed overall and the 2nd seed is #5 overall.

Teams after this date will be reseeded by:

1. Division
2. Finish in bracket
3. Game %
4. Point %

This will rank all teams across divisions and give us new seeds for teams 1-52 in the middle school, and 1-56 in the youth league.

After 9/21 and 10/5 the teams that win their bracket (2-0) and the teams that finish 4th (0-2) will move up and down so the team that wins bracket 3 will replace the team that lost bracket 2 etc... The teams that finished second and third will be the #2 and #3 seed respectively.

After 9/14 and 9/28 all teams will move to a different bracket. Teams that win their first match and finish either first or second will move up to the next bracket, finish order and replace the teams that finished third and fourth in the bracket above them.

Pool Schedules

The weekend's results will be entered and a new schedule for next week will be up by Wednesday 5pm at the latest.