

# Volleyball Safety

## A Guide to Injury Prevention

SCOTTISH RITE  
FOR CHILDREN

SPORTS  
MEDICINE

### What are the Risks?

Volleyball is becoming increasingly popular with America's youth. The fast-paced sport requires players to react to serves and high-speed hits by making sudden changes of direction and dives, creating opportunities for injury. Jumping for spikes and blocks can also result in a knee or ankle injury if the athlete lands awkwardly.

When competing year-round at a high level, as many players do, athletes are at risk of overuse injuries from exerting the same muscles so frequently. However, by resting often and following appropriate safety recommendations, an athlete can increase the likelihood of staying healthy all season.



## Common Volleyball Problems

### Knee Injuries

Landing awkwardly from a jump can cause sprains and tears to ligaments and cartilage, especially to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), medial collateral ligament (MCL), and the meniscus. A swollen knee after an injury warrants a medical evaluation.

A young athlete should not continue to play if the knee remains swollen.

### Finger Injuries

Blocking high speed hits and setting the ball can put the fingers at risk of being jammed, fractured, or dislocated. Jammed fingers can typically heal with ice and rest, but a fractured or dislocated finger may need medical attention.

### Ankle Injuries

Lateral ankle sprains are common in many sports. In volleyball, they may occur while changing direction or landing on another player's foot after a jump. Mild ankle sprains are treated with RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation). More severe sprains or inability to bear weight may require an X-ray and evaluation by a sports medicine specialist.

### Shoulder Pain

The repetitive overhead motion of serving and hitting the ball can lead to pain around an athlete's shoulder. Without ample recovery time, the tissue cannot adapt to the stress and the muscle, tendon, bone, or cartilage can be damaged. If pain persists after resting the injury for a couple days, the athlete should see a sports medicine specialist.

### Concussions

Most athletes that suffer a concussion do not lose consciousness. An athlete with any symptoms or change in behavior, thinking, or physical functioning after a blow to the head or body should be suspected of having a concussion and removed from play immediately.

# SCOTTISH RITE



## SPORTS MEDICINE

Scottish Rite Hospital's Center for Excellence in Sports Medicine is a comprehensive practice specializing in the treatment of sports-related injuries and conditions in young and growing athletes. Sports medicine physicians, pediatric orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists, athletic trainers, psychologists and others work side-by-side with athletes and their parents and coaches to develop the best game plan for recovery.

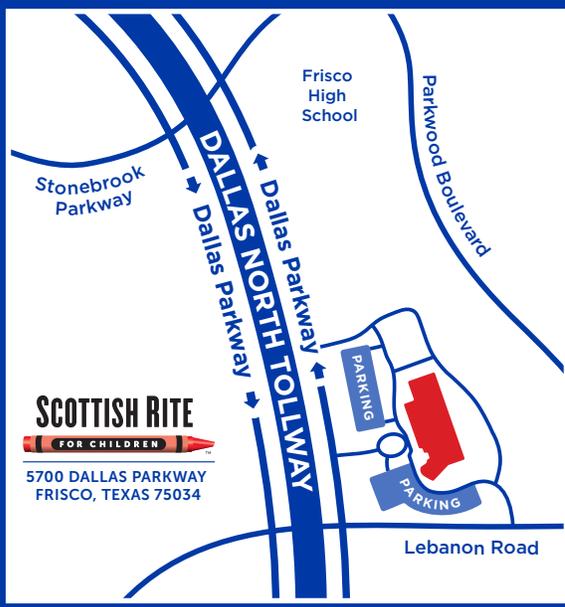
Call 469-515-7100 to schedule an appointment or request an appointment online.

Scottish Rite for Children Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center is located at the northeast corner of the Dallas North Tollway and Lebanon Road.

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## PREVENTING VOLLEYBALL INJURIES

### Play Smart and Be Aware of the Environment

All coaches want their players to hustle, but it is equally important to make smart plays. An athlete should be aware of objects around the court (score table, bleachers, benches, etc.) when running or diving for the ball. Learning to determine when to make a play or let it go can keep the athlete healthy for the next play.

### Communicate

Serves and hits come at a fast pace. Although there isn't much time, calling for the ball can help teammates avoid collisions or at least reduce the speed at which players collide. It will improve the team's defense too.

### Pre-season Physical Exam

Many leagues require a physical exam before allowing participation. These exams help identify existing injuries or conditions, heart or lung problems, and other issues that could make an athlete more prone to injury during play.

### Clean the Court

Make sure the floor is swept clean of debris, dust and trash. Also keep a towel near the bench to clean up water spills during timeouts and wipe up sweat when players dive on the floor.

### Warm up

A dynamic warm-up involves continuous movement to raise the body's core temperature in preparation for competition. Warming up the body increases the elasticity of the muscles, tendons and ligaments around the joints, decreasing the likelihood of injury. Furthermore, there is growing evidence to support the effectiveness of ACL prevention programs. These programs consist of exercises and routines that teach athletes how to land from jumps properly. Talk to your coach about adding a program to the team's warm-up routine.

### Stay Hydrated

An athlete's performance can be impacted by even mild dehydration. Players should drink often—ideally every 15-20 minutes. Water should be readily available, but sports drinks are recommended for vigorous activities lasting longer than one hour to replace electrolytes lost through sweat and carbohydrates needed for energy.

### Rest

Repetitive serving and hitting puts athletes at risk for irritation and inflammation of the muscles, ligaments and tendons surrounding the shoulder. Take a day or two off from volleyball each week to let the shoulder rest.

### Wear Appropriate Gear

Athletes should wear shoes that are the correct size and appropriate for the surface where play will be conducted. Knee pads provide protection while diving on the floor and athletes may also consider wearing ankle braces to reduce the risk of ankle sprains.