

## Volleyball Time!



Sara played volleyball. It was her favorite sport. Volleyball was an exciting team competition event. It had brief pauses, which kept the action moving. As soon as the ball started, it was a flurry of activity until the ball crashed into the ground. Then it started all over again!

Volleyball does not require much equipment, which is nice. It can be played with as little as 4 players in teams of 2. All you need is a net and a ball. It can be played in a sandpit or on the beach, as well as indoors on a court. If you play indoors, you'll want some kneepads and elbow pads. Otherwise, you really just need clothes you can move quickly in. Usually this means shorts and a shirt. Swimwear is often used on the beach for beach volleyball.

Inside, you play 6 players per team, while on the beach it's usually pairs of players on teams. Either way, the game is pretty similar. Teams take turns serving the ball. This means they stand at the back of the playing area, loft the ball up, and hit it over the net into the other team's area of play. That team has up to 3 touches of the ball to get it back over the net without letting it touch the ground. Players can hit it back immediately, so long as they get it over the net, but a lot of times players will 'set' the ball up into the air for their teammates to hit back over the net in a more advantageous position. As soon as the ball touches the ground or goes out of bound, play stops and points are awarded or possession of the ball changes.

Volleyball is easy to score. It's 1 point per touch of the ball on the ground if it hits on your opponent's side. So, if team A serves the ball, and after volleying it back and forth it ends up touching the ground in play on team B's side, then team A gets a point. Then they serve again and try to get more points. If team A serves the ball and it touches the ground on their side after team B returns their serve, then no points are awarded and team B gets a chance to serve. Points can usually only be scored on your team's serve, but there are alternate rules that allow for scoring whenever the ball hits the ground on either side. Games are usually played to 25 points, and sets of 3 games are often played to see who wins the best out of 3. It is pretty similar in this way to tennis or badminton.

Sara was pretty tall, so she usually started on the front line. She was a good blocker. When the other team served, she and other players jumped and held their hands up, attempting to block the serve back at the other team. Such a move was often hard to return, and it could end up in scoring some points for her team. She was pretty good at setting and attacking, too. She could loft the ball back into the air right by the net for a teammate to spike into the ground on the enemy team's side. She could dig, too, but it wasn't her best skill. This was when the ball was low and looked like it might hit the ground, and she had to dive and deflect the ball back up before it hit the ground, allowing her team to try to get it back over the net. This took a LOT of practice. She was pretty good at serving, too. Everyone had to take a turn at serving. She loved to score points for her team with a good serve!



Volleyball is a fast-scoring team sport. There is a lot of jumping and you really need to keep your eyes on the ball and be aware of where your teammates are. You have to predict what they will do and where the ball will go. It takes intuition and great teamwork. Sara had a friend she played very well with, so when they went to the beach, sometimes they teamed up in a beach volleyball competition. They'd even won trophies!

Sara knew that a lot of people didn't know much about her game. It wasn't the most popular game in America, even though it was invented here like basketball and baseball. Still, it was pretty popular at the high school and college levels. There were also international and pro competitions she hoped to be part of when she got older.

Are you going to try to watch or play volleyball?



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What sport does Sara play?
  - A. Badminton
  - B. Volleyball
  - C. Tennis
  - D. Handball
  
2. How many points do you need to score to win a volleyball game?
  - A. 12
  - B. 20
  - C. 21
  - D. 25
  
3. What skill is not Sara's best?
  - A. Setting
  - B. Serving
  - C. Digging
  - D. Blocking
  
4. TRUE OR FALSE: Volleyball was invented in America.
  - A. True
  - B. False
  
5. TRUE OR FALSE: Sometimes Sara plays in beach volleyball competitions.
  - A. True
  - B. False

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