



**USA Volleyball**  
**2007-08 Rules Interpretation Bulletin #1**  
**January 15, 2008**

This first Rules Interpretation Bulletin of the 2007-08 season will focus on the recent modification to USAV 5.3.1, as adopted by the USAV Executive Committee.

To review:

New USAV 5.3.1

*“One assistant coach may leave the bench to give instructions to the players on the court. This assistant coach may give these instructions while standing or walking within the free zone in front of his/her team bench from the extension of the attack line up to the warm-up area, no closer than 1 meter from the court, without disturbing or delaying the match. Other assistant coaches may give instructions to players on the court while remaining seated on the team bench.”*

Interpretations:

1. For teams with more than one assistant coach, does the new verbiage for USAV 5.3.1 mean “one assistant coach at a time may stand,” or does it mean that only one designated assistant coach may stand during the set (or match)?

**Ruling:** *The new verbiage means that one assistant coach may stand at any time. It does not mean that a team must designate only one assistant coach, who will have the privilege to stand.*

2. Can one assistant coach stand in the warm-up area during the match?

**Ruling:** *No. The rule specifically states that coach(es) may stand or walk in the free zone in front of the team bench from the attack line to the warm-up area. This allows a coach or one assistant coach to briefly instruct a player who is in the warm-up area, but does not allow the coach or assistant coach to remain (for any length of time) in the warm-up area.*

3. Is the assistant coach ever required to be seated on the bench during the match?

**Ruling:** *No, provided only one assistant coach is standing at any time, the assistant coach is never required to be seated on the bench.*

4. If more than one assistant coach stands during the set, how should this situation be handled?

**Ruling:** *This situation should be handled the same as any other disruptive coaching actions. It is the duty of the referees to prevent the teams from approaching the sanctioning level by issuing a verbal or hand signal warning (Rule 21.1). Inform the coach of the rule and that one (or more) of the assistants must remain seated on the bench. It is unlikely that two assistant coaches, who are standing, immediately constitutes rude behavior. But, just like any other behavior, if it persists, a penalty may be assessed against the offending team member.*

5. At a tournament which utilizes rosters that are available to the referees, a team has listed a coach, an assistant coach, a trainer, a chaperone and a team representative. Is the trainer, chaperone or team representative allowed the same privileges as the assistant coach under the new USAV 5.3.1?

**Ruling:** *No. Only the coach and one assistant coach may stand to give instructions to their team while standing or walking in front of their team bench. Obviously, if a player requires medical attention, either on the court, in the warm-up area or elsewhere, the team may choose whomever they desire to attend the player. Team staff members, other than the coach and assistant coach, must otherwise remain seated on the team bench.*

6. In the absence of chairs or bleachers for a team bench, how is USAV 5.3.1 applied?

**Ruling:** *If there is no physical bench, i.e., chairs, bleachers, etc., the referees will declare the bench area in the location that the physical bench would otherwise be located. Substitutes, other team members and coaching staff will remain in this area. Only the head coach and one assistant coach (at any time) may leave this area to instruct players on the court.*