

IFR BEACH FEST 2026

Official 4v4 Beach Volleyball Tournament Rules & Regulations

Date: Saturday, 24 October 2026

Location: Pretty Bay, Birżebbuġa, Malta

Tournament Start: 10:00 AM

Format: 4v4 Beach Volleyball | 16 Teams | 2 Courts

1. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

- The tournament consists of 16 teams divided into four groups (A, B, C and D), with four teams in each group.
- Each team plays three matches during the group stage.
- The top two teams from each group advance to the quarter-finals.
- The knockout stage consists of quarter-finals, semi-finals and the grand final.
- There will be no third-place playoff.
- The two losing semi-finalists will be recognised as joint third-place finishers.
- All matches will take place across two designated beach volleyball courts.

2. TEAM COMPOSITION & SUBSTITUTIONS

- Each team must have four players on the court at all times during play.
- Teams may register up to two substitute players, allowing a maximum squad size of six.
- Substitutions are permitted when the ball is out of play and must be approved by the referee.
- Substitutes must enter the team's serving rotation in accordance with the tournament referee's instructions.
- Players may only represent one team throughout the tournament.
- Teams must have at least four eligible players present to start a match.

3. MATCH FORMAT & SCORING

The tournament uses rally-point scoring, meaning a point is awarded after every rally, regardless of which team served.

Tournament Stage	Match Format
Group Stage	One set to 15 points
Quarter-finals	One set to 21 points
Semi-finals	Best of 3 sets, each to 15 points
Grand Final	Best of 3 sets: 21, 21 and 15 points

Scoring Regulations:

- Teams must win a set by a minimum margin of two points, except where a maximum point cap applies.
- Group-stage matches have a maximum score of 19 points. At 18–18, the next point wins.
- Quarter-final matches have a maximum score of 25 points. At 24–24, the next point wins.
- Semi-finals and the grand final have no maximum point cap.
- In best-of-three matches, the first team to win two sets wins the match.
- The third set, when required, is the deciding set.

4. SERVING RULES

- The serve must be taken from behind the baseline.
- Both underarm and overarm serves are permitted.
- A serve that touches the net and crosses into the opponent's court is valid.
- Players must follow the team's serving rotation.
- When a team wins back the right to serve, its players rotate clockwise.
- A player must not serve out of rotation.
- Blocking or attacking an opponent's serve above the height of the net is prohibited.

5. BALL CONTACT & PLAYING RULES

- Each team is permitted a maximum of three contacts before returning the ball over the net.
- A block counts as one of the team's three permitted contacts.
- A player may not touch the ball twice consecutively, except where permitted following a block or during a legal first team contact.
- The ball may be played using any part of the body.
- Catching, holding, carrying or throwing the ball is prohibited.

- The ball must be hit cleanly and must not come to rest during contact.
- Players may not interfere with opponents attempting to play the ball.

6. NET & COURT RULES

- Players must not touch the net between the antennas during the action of playing the ball.
- Players may not interfere with an opponent's play under or across the net.
- A ball touching any part of the boundary line is considered in.
- A ball landing completely outside the boundary lines is considered out.
- A ball crossing the net outside the antennas is out, subject to applicable ball-retrieval rules.
- Teams change ends every five combined points during 15-point sets.
- Teams change ends every seven combined points during 21-point sets.
- Court dimensions and net height will be confirmed by the organisers before the tournament.

7. GROUP STAGE RANKINGS & QUALIFICATION

Each team plays three group-stage matches.

Group Points:

- Win: 2 points
- Loss: 0 points

The two highest-ranked teams from each group advance to the quarter-finals.

Tie-Breaking Criteria:

If two or more teams finish with the same number of group points, the following criteria apply:

1. Head-to-head result, where exactly two teams are tied.
2. Overall points difference (total points scored minus total points conceded).
3. Total points scored across all group matches.
4. Results between the tied teams, where more than two teams remain tied.
5. If the tie remains unresolved, the tournament organisers will conduct a deciding draw.

8. KNOCKOUT STAGE

Eight teams qualify for the knockout stage.

Quarter-finals:

- QF1: Group A Winner vs Group B Runner-up
- QF2: Group C Winner vs Group D Runner-up
- QF3: Group B Winner vs Group A Runner-up
- QF4: Group D Winner vs Group C Runner-up

Semi-finals:

- SF1: Winner QF1 vs Winner QF2
- SF2: Winner QF3 vs Winner QF4

Grand Final:

- Winner SF1 vs Winner SF2

The grand final determines the IFR Beach Fest 2026 Volleyball Champions.

There will be no third-place playoff. Both losing semi-finalists will finish in joint third place.

9. MATCH TIMINGS & ATTENDANCE

- The tournament officially begins at 10:00 AM.
- All teams must complete registration before the tournament begins.
- Team captains must attend the pre-tournament briefing.
- Teams must report to their assigned court at least five minutes before their scheduled match.
- Teams arriving more than five minutes late may forfeit their match at the organisers' discretion.
- Forfeited matches will be recorded as 15–0 or 21–0, depending on the match format.
- Match timings may be adjusted by the organisers in the event of delays or unforeseen circumstances.
- Teams are responsible for monitoring the official match schedule and announcements.

10. REFEREEING & FAIR PLAY

- All matches will be supervised by designated referees or tournament officials.
- Referee decisions regarding factual gameplay are final.
- Only team captains may formally request clarification of a referee's decision.
- All participants must respect opponents, referees, spectators and tournament staff.
- Verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, deliberate interference and unsporting conduct are prohibited.
- Serious or repeated misconduct may result in warnings, point penalties, player removal or disqualification.
- All teams are expected to compete in a friendly and sportsmanlike manner.

11. PLAYER SAFETY & EQUIPMENT

- Matches will be played on designated sand courts prepared by the organisers.
- Players must wear suitable beach volleyball or beach-sport clothing.
- Dangerous jewellery and accessories must be removed before play.
- Players are encouraged to bring drinking water, sunscreen and appropriate sun protection.
- Any injury must be reported immediately to the referee or tournament organiser.
- Play may be suspended in the event of dangerous weather, unsafe playing conditions or serious injury.
- The organisers reserve the right to delay, suspend or cancel matches when necessary to protect participants.

12. ORGANISERS' AUTHORITY

- The IFR Beach Fest organisers have final authority over tournament administration, scheduling and interpretation of event-specific regulations.
- Any disputes not covered by these rules will be resolved by the tournament organisers in consultation with the designated referees.
- The organisers reserve the right to make necessary operational adjustments due to weather, safety concerns or unforeseen circumstances.
- Any significant rule or format changes will be communicated to team captains before implementation.

By participating in IFR Beach Fest 2026, all teams and players agree to comply with these tournament regulations and uphold the principles of respect, teamwork and fair play.

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Play hard. Play fair. Enjoy the game!