

A Guide to Playing at 4th Avenue

This Guide is designed to support the norms and values of playing at 4th Avenue. The principal purpose of posting this Guide is to reduce conflict arising from misunderstanding. Increased certainty = fewer arguments = more fun.

Philosophy—Why 4th Avenue Is Special

The pervasive good will and sense of community that make 4th Avenue such an enjoyable place depend on each of us trying to be our best selves while playing a highly competitive game.

- 👍 Being gracious and flexible at all times.
- 👍 Doing our best to ensure that everyone has a good day and goes home happy.
- 👍 Cheerfully sharing the responsibility of carrying nets up/down the stairs, setting up/breaking down courts and bringing volleyballs.
- 👍 Letting the examples set by John and Audrey be our guide.

If winning is your top priority, we wish you the very best wherever else you choose to play.

Players and Teams

Many of the guidelines below are based on the following very important definition of “available”: Players become “available” when they arrive at the beach, or the moment their game ends. A player has arrived when visible from the courts, or, for the first game, upon reaching 3rd Avenue.

- 🌀 Available players start out at the end of the queue waiting to play.
- 🌀 Players cease to be available the moment they have determined their partner for an upcoming game as described below, even if the game has not yet started.
- 🌀 A player who brings a net that’s needed for play to begin on a court moves to the top of the queue.
- 🌀 Teams for the first game of the day are based on order of arrival (i.e. 1st and 2nd arrivals play the 3rd and 4th arrivals). **Players who signed up online have priority over players who just show up for the first game.**
- 🌀 Previous partners split up except that the partners may stay together for 2 games, or more if both opponents agree and they are:
 - ▮ preparing for a tournament
 - ▮ related or sharing a household
 - ▮ playing with a friend who is new to 4th Avenue or a very infrequent guest
- 🌀 Players who sit out or leave and later return are at the bottom of the queue when ready to play.

Courts Management

- 🌀 The first three courts are managed in a single queue.
- 🌀 Court assignment can get confusing and complicated. As soon as your game is over or you arrive on the beach, please try to be clear about your spot in the queue and communicate with the other players in the queue. If you see players coming down the stairs, talking with them when they arrive is a great way to clarify your respective positions in the queue and avoid confusion or conflict when a game finishes. Communication is also especially important when two games finish almost simultaneously or someone leaves to play on another court.
- 🌀 Embracing the 4th Avenue philosophy and following the guidelines below will help smooth the court assignment process.
- 🌀 Do your best to ensure everyone is treated fairly and no one feels dissed.
- 🌀 Try to resolve controversies about court assignments amicably, realizing the system isn't perfect and you may not always get the result you believe to be right.

Court Assignment Guidelines

If you lose, you are instantly available and queued up behind anyone else already waiting. You will generally play your next game on the last court in use.

If 2 players become available at the same time, they can Rochambeau to see who is next in the queue.

While playing, if the next court "up" finishes and 4 or more players are available, please move your game up.

- Example: You are playing on Court 3 when the Court 2 game finishes; move your game to Court 2 if 4 players are available to play on Court 3.

If you win while a game on the next court up is still in progress, you and your partner may choose to move up and wait, or re-enter the queue at the bottom, ahead of the players you defeated. Each member of the winning team can decide independently.

- Example with 2 courts in use and 2 players in the queue:
You win on Court 2 and the game on Court 1 has just started. You can wait to play on Court 1 or re-enter the queue behind the 2 players who are waiting, in which case you'd play again immediately on Court 2.

If someone isn't ready to play and players are waiting, the next player in the queue takes their place. (Note: this is a recent change to reduce waiting.)

Prohibited: You are about to start a game on Court 3 and an opening arises on Court 1. Once you were assigned a partner, you ceased to be "available" and therefore are not in the queue to play on Court 1. The next available player who has not yet been assigned a partner should play on Court 1 even if that

player just lost on Court 1. This arrangement may seem unfair, but is necessary to prevent confusion and hard feelings.

Playing the Game

- For technical stuff, e.g., hand sets, driven balls, we try to follow CBVA rules.
 - Close games are the most fun! Stronger players should get a fair share of serves (unless you're getting slaughtered).
 - Hitting the ball over on 1 or 2 is generally frowned upon. Dumping the ball after your opponents have made a great save and are sprawled outside the court will definitely draw boos. Hitting on 2 rather than setting a weaker partner is demoralizing. Exceptions nonetheless occur, with various degrees of derision from the other team depending on the particular circumstances and the nature of the game. Common exceptions:
 - Your partner wants you to hit it over, e.g., option sets, partner is down
 - Blocking or other tight play at the net
 - "It's all I had" shots
- * If both teams agree it's CBVA tournament rules. (anything goes)

NOTE: We don't have (or need) referees or line judges. We rely on Honor and Integrity for line calls, net violations, setting, hitting, and ball handling errors. Players are expected to CALL YOUR OWN VIOLATIONS. (Lifts, throws, double hits, etc) **WE DO NOT ARGUE ABOUT CALLS**. If there is a difference of opinion about a play, **THE POINT IS PLAYED OVER**. Period! Players who want to argue over some small point rather than have a fun game with friend should go play with Carsten and Jim's group at Main Beach. Players who become known as arguers will be asked to not come and play at 4th Ave.

Introducing New Players to 4th Avenue

The 4th Avenue beach has always been a welcoming place toward new players who embrace the 4th Avenue philosophy and play at an appropriate level. Weaker players have been advised to take Liz's classes and hone their skills on Main Beach. Sourpusses and poor sports have received a cold shoulder. While this winnowing process could be considered unkind, it's necessary to preserve the qualities that make 4th Avenue special.

Once someone starts playing at 4th, removing them is very difficult and likely to result in hurt feelings (although it has happened). If you love 4th Avenue as it is, please keep it a loosely held secret and think carefully before extending an invitation. Even players who would fit right in can diminish everyone's enjoyment if too many people are on the beach.

Quick Summary of 4th Avenue Guidelines (Cheat Sheet)

80% of the stuff in 20% of the space

Be gracious and flexible at all times. Do your best to ensure that everyone has a good time.

Invite new players sparingly if at all. Beginners and poor sports belong elsewhere. Even players who would fit right in can diminish everyone's enjoyment if too many people are on the beach.

The first 3 courts are generally managed in a single queue with teams moving up from 3 to 2 to 1.

When you arrive at the beach, or lose on any court, you become "available" and go to the end of the queue.

Winners split up and play with new partners in the next game.

Exceptions:

- If a game on Court 2 started on Court 3, winners play their next game on Court 2.
- If there is a wait for the next game up, either or both winners can choose to go to the bottom of the queue ahead of the team they just defeated.
- Partners who have a special reason to play together may do so if their opponents agree.

If someone leaves, sits out after winning, or isn't ready to play, the next player in the queue takes their place.

When playing a game on Court 2 or 3, please move your game up when the next court becomes open.

Carrying a needed net down the stairs moves you to the top of the queue.

Once you have been paired with a partner for any game, you cease to be available, i.e., you can't drop your partner to play on a higher court unless no other players are available.

We do NOT argue calls. If there is a difference of opinion about a point, it is played over. You call your own violations. (sets, nets, hits, throws, carries, etc.)

If you want to practice setting, tell the other team to "play thru" any bad sets and work it out after the rally is over. If it goes over the net, it'd better be a good set. If the entire beach groans at your set, it's a bad set.