Side out in volleyball: cheat sheet

What a side out is, how scoring changed, and how to track it. By Ryan Walker

What a side out is

- **Side out:** the receiving team wins the rally. Today that earns one point, the serve, and a one-spot clockwise rotation.
- **Before rally scoring:** a side out won only the serve. You scored points only by winning a rally on your own serve.
- **Who serves next:** the player who rotates from zone 2 (right front) to zone 1 (right back).

Side-out scoring vs rally scoring

	Side-out scoring (old)	Rally scoring (today)
Who scores	Only the serving team	Whoever wins the rally
A side out gives you	The serve, no point	A point, the serve and a rotation
Sets played to	15, win by 2 (hard cap at 17 for a time)	25, deciding set to 15, win by 2
Set length	Unpredictable: grows as passing improves	About 45 to 47 rallies at any level

When each level switched

Year	Change
1988	Rally scoring for the deciding set only; 17-point cap on sets
1998-99	FIVB approves rally scoring for all sets (Oct 1998); in use from 1999
2001	NCAA women switch (sets to 30, then 25 from 2008); FIVB beach goes to 21-point sets
2003-05	US high schools: optional in 2003-04, required from 2004-05

Why it changed: 20,000 simulated sets per row (equal teams)

Receiving team wins	Old scoring, set to 15	Rally scoring, set to 25
50% of rallies	49 rallies on average	45 rallies
60% of rallies	63 rallies	46 rallies
70% of rallies	85 rallies (1 set in 10 past 109)	47 rallies

Side-out percentage

- **Formula:** side outs won / rallies your team received, x 100.
- **Use it by rotation:** the tracker on page 2 shows which rotation leaks points, so you know what to fix first.

Side-out tracker by rotation

Mark each receive rally: a slash for a chance, an X over it if you sided out. SO% = side outs / chances x 100.

Team: _____ **Opponent:** _____ **Date:** _____

Rotation	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Total SO%
Rotation 1 server: _____						
Rotation 2 server: _____						
Rotation 3 server: _____						
Rotation 4 server: _____						
Rotation 5 server: _____						
Rotation 6 server: _____						
Match total						

Write each rotation's side outs over chances, e.g. 7/11. Circle any rotation under half: that is your first practice target.

Coach's tip: a side out is one rally, not one pass.
Track the rotation, then ask why: the pass, the set, or the swing? Fix that one thing in practice.