

Table of Contents

● Gateway Region History	3
● Region Boundaries	3
● Gateway Region Junior’s Mission Statement	3
● Junior Volleyball	3
● How to Establish a USA Volleyball Junior Team	4
Coaches’ Requirements	4
Tryout Information	5
Notification Procedure	8
Registration Process	10
Uniforms	13
Tournament Entry	13/14
● Player Contact (recruiting)	14/15
● Transfers / Reassignment of Junior Players	14
● Recommendations for Gateway Coaches	15
● Concussion Document	16
● Age Division Definition	17
● Age Waivers	18
● Membership Benefits	19
● High School Associations	19
● Playing with 5 Policy	20
● Boy’s Participation in Girl’s Tournaments	21
● Officiating Requirements	21
● Junior Team Rankings	24
● Gateway Region Events	24
● Entry into Girl’s and Boy’s Junior National Championships (GJNC/BJNC)	28/29
● Gateway Region Parent Code of Conduct	30
● USAV Club Personnel Code of Ethics	31
● USAV Code of Conduct	33
● USAV E-Comm Policy	34
● USAV Travel Policy	37
● Gateway Region Due Process	41



This Gateway Region Junior Handbook contains the policies, procedures and Due Process adopted by the first Board of Directors in 1994, including additions and amendments through August 2023.

All coaches are required to read and know all the rules contained in this Handbook. Neither lack of awareness, nor misunderstanding of a rule or standard is a defense to a charge of wrongdoing.

Any questions regarding deviations from these set policies and/or procedures should be directed to the Regional Commissioner, Steve Mueth. In unusual circumstances, waivers may be granted.

Attachments

These Documents are updated by USAV and may all be found at www.gatewayvb.org when available

- Parent Code of Conduct
- Club Personnel Code of Conduct
- Participant Code of Conduct
- Tryout Sanction Form
- Instructions for Tryout Registration and Waiver Form
- Tryout Registration and Waiver Form
- FAQ Sheet
- Binding Commitment letter for Early Offer
- Binding Commitment Letter
- Team Registration Form
- Tournament Sanction Form
- Tournament Entry Form

As soon as they become available, current copies of the following forms may be downloaded from the Publications page on the Gateway Region website at www.gatewayvb.org:

- Player Medical Release Form
- Sport Accident and General Liability Insurance Fact Sheet
- Insurance Information Sheet on Incident and Claim Forms
- Incident Form
- Claim Form
- Instructions for Certificate of Insurance Request
- Certificate of Insurance Request

In addition to this Junior Handbook, The Gateway Region Player's Handbook and Tournament Director's Manual can be found on the Gateway website, www.gatewayvb.org.

GATEWAY REGION HISTORY

At the August 1993 USAV Heart of America Regional meeting, the HOA Board voted to release the Gateway district to apply for full region status at the 1993 mid-year ROD meeting. In the 1994 season, the Gateway Region was fully established as a separate and autonomous region.

The Gateway Region was formed in 1993 to promote the growth of volleyball within our area. Tim Neels was the first Commissioner and retired in May 2018. Dr. Steve Mueth was elected Commissioner and presided over his first board meeting in August 2018.

GATEWAY BOUNDARIES

The Gateway Region encompasses the eastern part of Missouri and the southern part of Illinois. In Missouri, the region includes all areas with zip codes beginning with 630 through 639 plus 654 and 655. In Illinois, the boundary includes all areas south of interstates 70 and 270. Our membership comes from cities as far away as Quincy and Springfield in Illinois, to Springfield and West Plains in Missouri.

GATEWAY REGION JUNIOR MISSION STATEMENT

The USA Volleyball Gateway Region Junior's Program Mission Statement is to promote a wholesome environment so that players can develop skills, teamwork, positive attitude, competitive spirit, responsibility, and sportsmanship. This Mission can only be accomplished with the cooperation of coaches, parents, players, and officials.

JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL

Junior volleyball is a program for girls and boys 18 years of age and younger.

The purpose of the USA Volleyball Junior volleyball program is to offer youths an opportunity to become involved in a wholesome and beneficial athletic activity that they can pursue at various skill levels. In many cases, it is a chance for athletes to receive high quality instruction in skills development and team strategy. A USA Volleyball Junior volleyball program should be an extension of learning from the high school program and a natural bridge between youth volleyball (ages 8 and under) and college volleyball or USA Volleyball adult volleyball.

USAV Junior volleyball competition season runs from September 1, until the Junior National Championships (JNC) in June/July. Many athletes are also involved in their schools' programs at the same time they are learning from you. Do not put unreasonable demands on the athletes. Let them stay loyal to their school programs as well. If they enjoy your program and that is where they want to focus their attention, let that be their decision. You, not their school coach, will need to be flexible. Try to schedule practice on days or times that don't conflict with the majority of their games. Be reasonable; keep the athlete's best interest at heart. Remember the philosophy of USAV Junior volleyball program: ***ATHLETES FIRST--WINNING SECOND.***

HOW TO ESTABLISH A USA VOLLEYBALL JUNIOR CLUB / TEAM

Key items listed in the following sections:

Coaches' Requirements – IMPACT and Background Screening (Section II)

Tryout Guidelines (Section VI – VII)

Registration Process (Section VIII - IX)

Officiating Requirements (Section X and p 21)

Uniform & Tournament Information (Section XII – XIII)

A SINGLE named Club Director of a junior club in the Gateway Region is the individual who is ultimately responsible for club activities.

- I. Decide on what type of program you will have. If you are a new team/club contact the Gateway Region Office to make sure that the name you are planning to use is available. If you have an established club and would like to retain the club name from the prior season, the club director must become a member for the new season.
 - A. What age groups will you have?
Boy's or Girl's 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11 or 10-and-Under age division teams, Coed 10-and-Under age division teams or a 9 or 8 and Under program. (No Junior National Championships (JNC) will be offered in the 8, 9, or 10 and Under divisions). **With the Junior Coordinator's permission, in the 12s and younger age divisions, a maximum of two (2) boys are allowed on a girls' team, though the team will be flagged as waived. Please contact Chris Clauss at cmwarner24@gmail.com for permission.**
 - B. What will be your club's focus, your goals and objectives?
 - Take all comers, everyone plays.
 - Elite, accepts only the best.
 - A combination of the above.
- II. Recruit any coaches you will want or need in the program. *Remember, leadership is the key to any program, without strong committed leadership any program is doomed to flounder and eventually fail.* Listed below are 6 requirements regarding coaches:
 - a. All coaches must be, at minimum, IMPACT certified or in the process of obtaining certification (registered for an online IMPACT course).
 - b. Each team must have at least one adult coach (18 years of age or older) who is, at minimum, IMPACT certified at every practice and tournament.
 - c. Every coach must be a registered member (see Section IX.)
 - d. Each coach must pass a background screen every year – application for the screens are made every year. (see Section IX)
 - e. Any adult involved with junior programming, including but not limited to: all coaches, team reps, chaperones, referees, or scorekeepers; must become SafeSport Certified and Background Screened. Core SafeSport Certification must be renewed annually with SafeSport Refresher Courses.
 - f. Every coach should complete USAV officiating modules online before the first tourney.

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

Also, for insurance purposes, ANY adult (not just coaches) affiliating with a junior team (e.g. coaches, team representatives, club representatives and chaperones) must meet all the requirements above – c, d, & e, except IMPACT and Officiating certification. (see Section IX).

Note: For the JNC and Qualifying events, chaperones are no longer required. Instead, USAV requires that USAV clubs have a Travel and Electronic Communications Policy (page 37)

On-Demand IMPACT training is available as part of your membership and can be accessed through your SportsEngine account. Completed IMPACT is valid for your lifetime.

Teams without a rostered IMPACT certified coach will not be allowed to participate in Gateway Region sanctioned tournaments. If a team is found to be playing in a tournament without an IMPACT certified coach on its bench, the team may be immediately dropped from the tournament, forfeiting any games played, and the coach(s), team and club may be subjected to a fine up to \$100 and probation.

In unusual circumstances, a waiver for IMPACT may be granted. Contact Chris Clauss, the Gateway Region Junior Development Coordinator, at cmwarner24@gmail.com or 314-630-4523 with questions regarding IMPACT certification.

III. Decide how the program will be financed.

- A. Initial assessment
- B. Regular monthly dues.
- C. Fund raisers.
- D. Local merchants in your community to donate to the program.
- E. Solicit a sponsor for a team or club.
- F. A combination of the above methods.
 - Filing as a non-profit organization is an option. Consult an accountant for details.

IV. Find a place to hold your tryouts, a place to practice and obtain volleyballs.

V. In order to help players and parents make informed decisions when choosing clubs, our website includes a “Junior Club Profile” page for clubs to provide more details about their program. Contact Linus shyu.gatewayvb@gmail.com to submit a club profile. Clubs can also direct players and parents to the “Parent’s Page” on the website, for guidance in making their club decisions.

VI. **Tryout Guidelines**

If players want the opportunity to represent their high school, the Missouri State High School Activities Association requires that all potential USAV participants must attend open and publicized tryouts. Local organization newsletters offer publication of team tryouts free of charge. You may also generate flyers to send to area schools, give to individuals and post in gyms. Another option is to include your tryout information on the Gateway web page through the sanction process detailed in the next paragraph. The

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

Illinois State High School Association rules, in some cases, greatly differ from those in Missouri; please check and abide by all pertinent rules for both states.

For USAV insurance purposes, all tryouts must be sanctioned. To sanction your tryout, complete the Gateway Region Tryout Sanction Form located on the “Publications” page on the Gateway website. There is no sanction fee. **If you choose not to sanction your tryout, you will not have USAV liability Insurance coverage, and your team/club will assume all liability and risk.** If indicated on your form, your information will be added to the tryout schedule posted on the web page – your tryout does not need to be publicized on our website. Before a club may sanction tryouts, the Club’s Director must have a current membership, background screen, and SafeSport Certification through USAV.

Tryout Starting Dates (2025-2026 Season)*

Girl’s 15s-18s, on or after 5:00 PM Friday, **July 25, 2025.**

Boy’s may have tryouts on or after 5:00 PM Friday, **September 5, 2025.**

Girl’s 8-14s may have tryouts on or after 5:00 PM Friday, **October 24, 2025.**

*Clubs who are located geographically in the border areas of the Gateway Region may request a waiver to allow tryout dates earlier than the dates listed above.

No player shall be compelled to commit to a team prior to 7pm Sunday of the 1st allowable tryout weekend of their defined playing division, no matter what season.

Notes:

Makeup Tryouts for Girl’s 15s-18s **should not** be scheduled anytime during the official Fall HS seasons in IL and MO. Dates vary year to year, but the start of season typically begins with a state mandated “dead period” late July and/or early August, and concludes with each state’s respective state championships. A “dead period” is defined by each state’s organizations as a time when HS coaches may not have any contact with their school athletes. To prevent potential conflict with HS coaches that are associated with club volleyball, this period is included with regards to club makeup tryouts. Girls eligible to play 14 and under who are in high school cannot tryout until their rostered team’s playing season has officially ended.

For the 10s and younger age division Instructional Programs, clubs are not required to host a tryout and may use a club online registration system or sign-up method. If a club plans for a full-fledged competitive 10s team/s to participate in 10s & 11s tournaments, the current tryout guidelines must be followed. Clubs should communicate with players/parents at tryouts if there is a possibility that the 10s team intends to participate in a competitive full season of 10s or 11s and older events.

Note: Boys who attend summer team tryouts must not be currently registered with any junior boys’ team. An exception may be granted in advance if a team declares that they will not continue playing after the boy’s high school season. This intent must be on file at the Gateway Region office before tryouts. Violation of this policy may result in a player’s suspension from USAV participation for up to one year.

Tryout Paperwork Required

1. Junior Tryout Information Registration & Waiver Form (see website)
2. FAQ Sheet (see website)
3. Information Sheet (created by club)

For insurance purposes, each player must complete a combined Junior Tryout Information Registration and Waiver Form which requires player and parent/guardian signatures. Players under 18 years of age **must** have a parental signature before being allowed to tryout. **If the parents do not sign, USAV insurance will not apply and your team/club must assume any liability risks. If a participant is injured, you MUST fill out an incident report (Found on publications/forms tab of Region Website) and return the incident report with their Waiver Form to the office within 24 hours of the incident (scan & email to shyu.gatewayvb@gmail.com). Retain the original forms in case they are later needed for insurance purposes.**

Upon request, parents may be permitted to observe tryouts provided that they are not disruptive or pose a safety hazard to players or coaches.

Each club/team will be required to make the FAQ sheet and an Information Sheet available at tryouts. This information sheet must be pertinent to all teams within the club. The minimal information that must be included is as follows:

Club History—Years of operation.

Club Philosophy—What level of teams (high, intermediate, training)? Will age waived players be accepted? Club organization of administration: is it centralized or does each team run independently? Club goals: to service certain localities, national level competition, training players, or all of the above. Policy of moving players from one team to another within the club during the season. Level of commitment from players and parents (fundraising, travel etc.). Attendance at practice, and parents' required behavior and responsibilities within the club.

Budgets—Estimates; line-item estimates; non-refundable club fees, uniforms, registration, tournament fees, travel costs. Are coaches or club directors paid? And how much? When are moneys due? Does individual player money go to support another team within same club?

Team Information—How many teams are planned per age group? Who will coach? (if known) Will teams practice together?

Head Coach Biography—Past coaching experience, including age groups and accomplishments, formal coaching education (IMPACT, CAP Level training, other); assistant coach biographies are welcomed.

Practice—Estimated times per week, location, and approximate length of practices. Penalties for failure to attend practice?

Tournaments—Approximately how many tournaments per month? In town? Out-of-town? Starting in what month? Are you playing USAV Qualifiers, or only JVA events; or a combination of both?

- VII. In accordance with Missouri and Illinois State High School Association rules, it is important to stress to the player and parent/guardian that it is their responsibility to be aware of the Gateway tryout procedures. Coaches, players and parents are also responsible to know the specific high school rules for their state. Violations by club administrators or coaches may be reported by the player or parent/guardian to MSHSAA/IHSA.

NOTIFICATION / ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURE

An optional Binding Commitment Letter is available (on the Gateway Publications page or in the attachments) for club use to facilitate the Notification / Acceptance process. However, coaches and club administrators cannot mandate a player sign the Binding Commitment Letter. Binding Commitment Letters collected by a club are NOT submitted to the Gateway Office except in a situation where the commitment has been violated. Then the form must then be submitted to the office immediately.

Coaches may let players know if they have been selected for an age division within their club at any time after their tryout. At that time, a coach can tell the player one of three things:

1. You have made a team.
2. You are an alternate.
3. You did not make a team.

For tryouts held on the first allowable weekend, the coach must allow a “waiting period” for the chosen athlete to make the decision on whether or not to commit, according to the following guidelines:

If the tryout start date is Friday, **July 25, 2025**, the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, July 27, 2025**.

If the tryout start date is Friday, **September 5, 2025**, the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, September 7, 2025**.

If the tryout start date is Friday, **October 24, 2025**, the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, October 26, 2025**.

If a coach makes an offer to a player, the offer cannot be rescinded unless a player declines an offer or does not respond by the commitment date/time listed above. Rescinding an offer before the commitment dates/times listed for each applicable tryout period constitutes a violation by the coach and/or Club, which is a punishable offense under Gateway Region policies. “Conditional offers” (offers made with a condition attached, such as “commit right now and we’ll guarantee you …”) are likewise unethical and constitute a punishable recruiting violation.

A “waiting period” is not required for clubs holding tryouts on or after the official commitment dates and time defined above; the player may be asked to officially commit to the team immediately.

For tryouts held on the first available weekend, a player essentially has 3 options when the coach notifies them that they have been selected for a team:

1. To accept the offer*
2. To reject the offer
3. To use the "waiting period", according to the above guidelines, before making their decision

* The Gateway Region Binding Commitment Letter is not required to formalize the player's acceptance of an offer by a club. A player can choose to sign the letter or not; a coach or club administrator cannot mandate that a player sign this document. If a player accepts a club offer by signing the Binding Commitment Letter, the player may not leave that club to represent another club during the season (see page 14). An Electronic copy of this original document (Scanned into a PDF and emailed by the parent/player to a team coach) or a clear photo (Texted or attached and emailed by the parent/player to a team coach) will be sufficient and legal proof of the decision made in the Binding Commitment Letter.

In the event that a team has **less** than 6 committed players by 8am the Friday immediately following tryouts, the commitment letter (if signed by the player and parent/guardian/legal representative) will be voided and those players released to find another team. A club/team reserves the right to disband a team of less than 6 players before that Friday in the event they feel a team may not form.

At any time after the official commitment dates/times defined above, club administrators may direct players to register online through the process detailed on the Gateway website. Any additional paperwork and club fees may also be collected at this time. **There are no player transfers within the Gateway Region. Once a player/guardian signs this binding commitment letter and/or completes a team/club registration process and/or makes payments towards a club's fees, that player is bound to that team/club for the entirety of the 2025-2026 season. See Transfers Pg 14 & 15.**

- VIII. Conduct a meeting with players and at least one parent or guardian of each player.
- A. Introduce your coaching staff and their qualifications.
 - B. Explain how the program will operate.
 - C. Discuss the methods of financing the program. The offering of monies for club fees/dues or "scholarships" to athletes is not supported by the Gateway Region. Those entities offering such monies should be aware that this could affect an athlete's school eligibility under current MSHSAA and IHSA rules and regulations. Reducing club fees due to a work program could also cause negative consequences for the athlete.
 - D. Decide on how the team will get equipment and uniforms.
 1. Borrowed.
 2. Purchased by the club and rented to the players.
 3. Purchased by the club and owned by the players.

4. Each player to purchase their own.
- E. You **MUST** tell both the players and their parents or guardians that players can be hurt seriously playing volleyball. (THIS MUST BE DONE FOR LIABILITY INSURANCE PROTECTION.)
- F. You should tell them that neither the players nor their parents or guardians may recruit another player who has already committed to another club during the season.
- G. Get a commitment from parents as to what their assistance to the program will be (help with travel, uniforms, fund raising, treasurer, etc.). A Parent Code of Conduct Form is available for your use (in the attachments or on the Gateway website).

IX. **Registration Process:** All Individuals and teams must register with the Gateway Region.

All Club Directors must be USA Volleyball members and will be responsible for all actions and activities of their club's members.

The 25-26 membership season is the sixth year of the Member Management System (MMS) thru SportsEngine. Club Directors will be Organizational and USAV admins of their SportsEngine HQ account where the MMS will be housed. In order to function as an admin in good standing, they must have a current membership, background screen and SafeSport.

Process for Individual Registration:

There are several avenues a Junior Player will obtain a Gateway Region Membership. If you are affiliating with a junior club please ensure you consult with club contact they will advise on steps they want you to follow to purchase. **If you are a transgender athlete planning to participate in the Gateway Region, you will need to apply with the USAV Transgender Commission at ChairGenderCom@usav.org.**

25-26 Membership Season: After Tryouts, a club may send you a club specific link that will take you thru the purchase of membership and assigning that membership to the club you have committed to play for. Ensure you only go to a club's link you have committed to.

Another avenue of membership purchase available is that the club you are affiliating with purchases a membership on your behalf. In order for them to make this purchase you must have accepted a Member Invite to get you into their online directory and have signed a Gateway Binding Letter of Commitment. You will receive an email with the membership information and at that point must complete the previously mentioned waivers.

A free SportsEngine user account will be required to be setup by a parent of the child in order to complete all requirements regardless of purchase method. The player will be a profile within the parental account. A waiver and release of liability, code of conduct, and refund policy acknowledgement will have to be completed as part of the membership

purchase process for a player to be eligible. If turning 18 during season SafeSport completion required.

Please note the membership fee will now show two charges the Gateway Region membership fee and the USAV national membership fee. All payments must be made online and there is a 2.95% processing fee on the region portion.

In addition to completing the registration process, any adult intending to affiliate with a junior team, or referee / mentor / site-direct at junior events, must also submit and pass a background screen every year AND complete SafeSport Certification/Refresher every single year. Links to complete these eligibility requirements will be sent via email or can also be access by logging into your SportsEngine user account. Background screen fees are \$14. Core SafeSport and its refreshers are Free. All Club Personnel must complete a Junior Club Personnel Code of Ethics Form

Process for Team Registration:

The admin for the club will submit the team roster into the Season Management of the SportsEngine Member Management System. This can be done by manual entry or CSV import. All will be done online within your HQ. If all rules for the age division you are submitting the roster for are met the team information can automatically flow thru to the region and USA Volleyball and be approved without any manual intervention.

Background Screen Fees \$14.00 (good for 1 year)

Individual Membership Fees

Gateway Junior 17 Under Player	\$55.00
(After March 1st)	\$40.00*
Gateway Junior Player 18's	\$55.00
Gateway Junior Outdoor Player	\$25.00
10 and Under Players (Instructional)	\$20.00
Gateway Adult Player	\$35.00
Gateway Adult Club Director	\$55.00
Gateway Adult Coach of Juniors	\$55.00
Gateway Adult Officials	\$55.00
Gateway Adult with Safety Requirements	\$55.00
Gateway Junior Aged Coach	\$55.00
Gateway Junior Aged Staff	\$55.00
Gateway Summer Adult Coach	\$15.00
Gateway One Event Membership	\$10.00

If it is found that a non-registered individual participates in a sanctioned event, a \$35 fine must be paid in addition to the regular membership fee before the individual will be allowed to participate. Additional penalties may apply to the individual, as well as the team and club they participated with. If an Individual Adult or Junior Member (or person

acting in this capacity) owes fees to the Gateway Region, the individual is considered “not in good standing” and is ineligible to participate in USAV sanctioned events until the debt is paid in full. If a Junior Team Rep (or person acting in this capacity) owes fees to the Gateway Region, ALL team members are “not in good standing” and are ineligible to participate in USAV sanctioned events until the debt is paid in full. The Junior Club Representative (or person acting in this capacity) is ultimately responsible for any of their club’s debt to the Gateway Region and if that individual owes fees to the Gateway Region, then all the club’s members are considered “not in good standing” and ineligible to participate in USAV sanctioned events until the debt is paid in full. The USAV Domestic Competition Regulations (rule book) may be found on the region’s website. In addition to this Junior Handbook, the Gateway Region Player’s Handbook is available on the Gateway website. It is your responsibility to be familiar with this material.

- X. Train your team to officiate. USA Volleyball competition in the Gateway Region has traditionally been officiated by the players. Each team must supply Junior or Adult Certified Officials. It is strongly recommended that all players receive certification as referees and/or scorers. Officiating responsibilities include: 1st referee (certified), 2nd referee (certified), scorer (certified), two line judges and an assistant scorer to attend to the visual score and to track the Libero. Refer to the Junior Officials’ Requirements section.

- XI. Begin practice. If facilities require proof of insurance, Certificates of Insurance can be issued by contacting Josh Mattingly at jmattingly.gatewayvb@gmail.com. **Allow 48 hours for Region Staff to reach USAV. Allow an additional 7 days for processing depending on time of year.** Members/clubs who have sanctioned activities through the Gateway Region where USAV insurance is provided must be in good standing in the region. Good standing may be revoked if facility requirements are violated or outstanding fees are due for facility usage. If a member’s/club’s good standing is revoked, they may forfeit the privilege of sanctioning activities in the region for the remainder of the season or for the following season.

Please note: USAV Insurance ONLY covers practices and competition. This supplemental liability insurance does NOT cover any other club’s activities, such as Open Gyms, Camps, Clinics, or Private Lessons. A specific Tryout and Waiver form (see junior forms on website) is required by all participants to attend a tryout for a USAV club. A club is responsible for providing their own liability insurance for those activities that are outside the defined activities of USAV competition and practice.

XII. Order uniforms.

JUNIOR TEAM UNIFORM CODE

A player's uniform consists of a jersey and shorts. The current USAV uniform code can be found in the USAV Domestic Competition Regulations (DCR). For nationally sanctioned USAV competition, all players (including the Libero) are required to wear the same jersey number throughout the entire event. *This is not required for Gateway sanctioned events (excluding the Boy's and Girl's Bid Events). This policy allows a team to use one Libero jersey for multiple players.*

- Uniforms must be numbered in a permanent manner using Arabic Numerals
 - a. Numbers 1-99 are legal. Numbers 0, 00-09 are not legal and will not be permitted
 - b. Number minimum height: Front 4"; Back 6". Recommended: Front 6"; Back 8"
 - c. The stripe must be solid with a minimum width of 3/4".
 - d. Stripe must clearly contrast with the jersey. This means the ENTIRE number, even if outlined, must CLEARLY contrast with the jersey. (Effective 2018-2019)
 - e. Numbers are recommended to be placed on the upper half of the jersey. Numbers may not extend below the player's waist and may not be tucked into the uniform bottom.

- Motion: Uniforms for Gateway Sanctioned events, excluding Bid Event, must be similar, except for the Libero. Bid Event, and other USAV Nationally Sanctioned Events (Qualifiers, JNC) require **Identical** uniforms per USAV Rules. I.E. In region (except the Gateway Bid Event), players may wear black bikers of different brands (Nike, Under Armour, Asics) as long as they are all black. They may NOT wear different styles (solid, vs striped).

A \$10 fine will be assessed to each person who does not have a legal uniform. The fine should be made payable to the Gateway Region - USAV and given to the Tournament Director for any and all team members who are not in legal uniforms. This fee is nonrefundable even if the uniform violation is corrected. Tournament Directors should submit to the Gateway Office, any uniform violation fees with their required paperwork noting the name of the team and individuals effected.

Illegal uniforms should be reported to the Gateway Office. A written waiver for uniforms may be allowed for up to one year if requested in writing to the Gateway Region Commissioner. The waiver must be presented to the Tournament Director if requested to avoid the uniform violation fee.

- XIII. Enter tournaments as early as possible because they fill up fast. A list of junior tournaments and the tournament directors can be obtained from the Gateway Region Website: www.gatewayvb.org. The list is constantly updated as event sanctions are received. To enter, submit a SportsEngine roster and entry fee to the Tournament Director. Some tournaments utilize online platforms to handle their tournament registrations and online payment. The Junior Tournament Entry Form may be submitted initially with the

entry fee; however, a SportsEngine roster must be submitted prior to participating in the tournament. The later you enter, the less likelihood there is you will be accepted.

If a team withdraws from a tournament, that team forfeits its entry fee unless a replacement team can be found. The withdrawing team cannot play in another Gateway sanctioned tournament on the same weekend regardless if the spot is filled or not. Tournament directors may keep 25% of a team's entry fee if a team chooses not to participate due to dangerous travel conditions.

If a Tournament Director cancels an event for any reason, a team's total entry fee must be refunded. The only exception is if a Tournament Director is forced to cancel a tournament/division due to dropped teams, resulting in less than the minimum number of teams needed to run that tournament/division. He/she is then only required to refund the entry fee to the teams that have not dropped from the tournament. Refunds will be issued and postmarked within 14 days of event cancellation.

If a Tournament Director sanctions a tournament and the entry fee reflects the provision of 1st officials, teams may expect that 1st officials will be provided throughout that tournament. If a team is without a paid 1st official, the Tournament Director shall refund the difference between the entry fee and the maximum fee of \$125 to each team affected. **Refunds will be issued and postmarked within 14 days of the event.**

If a Tournament Director owes fees, confirmed by the Gateway office, to any party and does not pay **within the 14-day postmark**, then they are no longer in good standing, and may not be permitted to participate in or host any USAV sanctioned events for the remainder of the current season and the following season.

PLAYER CONTACT

Recruiting is the active pursuit of an athlete to play for a particular club or team, including active verbal or personal invitations to attend a club's future activities. Once an athlete has signed with a team or club, contacts with the player or parents of the athlete with respect to recruiting cannot be done during the official Junior Volleyball Season. The junior season runs from September 1 and concludes at the end of the JNC. If the athlete's team has finished playing for the season it is acceptable for a recruiter to contact the player or parents of the athlete. This must be confirmed by the head coach or club representative prior to the contact or the recruiter may be subject to penalties.

TRANSFERS / REASSIGNMENT of JUNIOR PLAYERS

There are **no** player transfers between active junior teams. The regular junior season runs from September 1 and concludes at the end of the JNC. Once a junior member has committed to a team/club (signed the Binding Commitment Letter **and/or** completed the registration process and/or paid fees) she/he may not leave that club to represent another club during that season.*

*A player can be reassigned to a different club in the Gateway Region if the team the player is currently affiliated with has discontinued play for the season. This must be confirmed by the **Club Director** before any contact with the player. The process to reassign a player is for the **Club Director** to notify the Gateway Region Registrar (kmattingly.gatewayvb@gmail.com) in writing that the current team of affiliation has concluded play for the season, followed by a request from the new Club Director to reassign that inactive player to their team.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GATEWAY COACHES

The following are recommendations from the Gateway Region. Some are suggested in fairness to all Gateway clubs and current or potential new participants, while other recommendations are included to protect a player's school eligibility.

- Do not make excessive contacts with a player or parents in preseason. (Example: sending a mailer or making 1 or 2 contacts is enough to let a player know you are interested).
- Do not try to influence a commitment from a player or parents once they have accepted a position with another club.
- Promote the game of volleyball as positively as possible.
- Support and understand the region's policies.
- When traveling out-of-region with other teams, support our region's teams.
- Explain extra costs up front to parents and any possible fundraising the team might do. (Example: uniforms, coaches travel expenses, tournament entry fees, gym rental fees....)
- Know when your team will practice, where and for how long.
- If your club has multiple teams in the same age group, know the club's policy on placing players on teams.
- Explain to parents/players what level of team you are expecting to have this season (competitive vs. developmental; waived vs. non-waived).
- Know how many tournaments and weekend trips you expect to take.
- Have an idea of how many players you will keep (8---12???)
- Explain to parents and players they are paying to be coached, not to play every minute of every game.
- The Gateway Region Strongly recommends that each club is familiar with the CDC's Signs and Symptoms and follows the CDC's Action Plan as listed on the following page.

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN VOLLEYBALL

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

These signs and symptoms may indicate that a concussion has occurred.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events *prior* to hit or fall
- Can't recall events *after* hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, you should take the following steps:

- 1 Remove athlete from play.
- 2 Ensure athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
- 3 Inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them CDC's Fact Sheet for Parents on concussion.
- 4 Allow athlete to return to play only with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.



For more information and to order additional materials free-of-charge, including CDC's Fact Sheet for Parents, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

A part of CDC's Heads Up Series.



AGE DIVISION DEFINITIONS FOR 2025-2026

Once a player has:

1. Been enrolled at a university, college, community college or junior college AND
2. Been cleared to participate by that (volleyball) program

The player is ineligible to take part in any regional and national programming, which includes but is not limited to national JNC qualifying and championship events.

18 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2007 (including high school graduates eligible based on the above paragraph)

18 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2006 and a high school student in the twelfth (12 th) grade or below during some part of the current academic year are eligible to compete on 18 and under teams.

17 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2008

17 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2007 (18 years or younger) who shall neither have completed nor are in a grade higher than the eleventh grade (11th) during the current academic year are eligible to participate in the 17 and under age division. These players are still subject to frozen roster rules.

16 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2009

15 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2010

14 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2011

Boys 14 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2010 (15 years or younger) who shall neither have completed nor are in a grade higher than the eighth grade (8th) during the current academic year will be allowed to participate at the USA Junior National Championships on 14 and under teams. These players are still subject to frozen roster rules. (This is because the net height difference of 7'4 1/8" to 7' 11 5/8" between the 14 and Under Division to the 15 and Under Division.)

13 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2012

Boys 13 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2011 (14 years or younger) who shall neither have completed nor are in a grade higher than the seventh grade (7th) during the current academic year are eligible for a Region approved waiver to compete in the boys 13's age group. This age waiver is still subject to frozen roster rules.

12 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2013

Boys 12 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2012 (13 years or younger) who shall neither have completed nor are in a grade higher than the sixth grade (6th) during the current academic year are eligible for a Region approved waiver to compete in the boys 12's age group. This age waiver is still subject to frozen roster rules.

11 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2014

10 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2015

9 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2016

8 and Under Division: Players who were born on or after July 1, 2017

Note: These age definitions are used by domestic club programs and are NOT the same as the age definitions for International Competition and Domestic National Team Development Programs.

The Age Definition Policy was most recently revised by the USA Volleyball Board of Directors on May 27, 2025.

Notes:

- a. A team or an individual may play up in any division but not down, for example: a 15-year-old sophomore on a 16 and under team may play in an 18 and under tournament, but they could not play in a 14 and under tournament. **NOTE:** A player who is technically a lower age division player, but registered on an upper age division team, may play on a team within their club at the lower age division. Any roster changes must be noted on the tournament roster prior to the start of play.
- b. Only Girl's and Boy's 15s, 16s, 17s and 18s may play in an adult division.

AGE WAIVERS

In June of 2020, USAV approved the above changes in the Age Definition to reflect a July 1st cutoff date, instead of a September 1st cutoff date. This change was made to better align age with grade, so players could play with peers of their graduation class. The above age definition will be used to govern eligibility for USAV sanctioned events, such as Girls National Qualifiers, Boys National Bid Events, and USAV Junior Nationals.

Within the Gateway Region, we are granting automatic waivers to players to play with their peers in their grade, up to a year older than their specified USAV age definition. The player will have to provide their last report card/transcript to verify their academic grade. For instance, an 11 and under player has to have been born on or after July 1, 2014. 98% of 5th graders fall into this age range. However, a small percentage of 5th graders may have been born in May or June of 2013, before the July 1, 2014 cutoff. Those 5th graders born before July 1, 2014, but after July 1, 2013 will be granted an age waiver if they provide their most recent report card/transcript verifying their academic grade. Any special-case extreme extenuating-circumstance appeals may be made to Chris Clauss, Gateway Region Junior Coordinator before tryouts- cmwarner24@gmail.com.

It is important to understand the region age waiver does NOT pertain to nor will be accepted at nationally sanctioned play or play outside the Gateway Region. If a Gateway Region age waiver is granted to a player, and that player is added to a team roster, that waived **team** may not participate in JNC bid offering events; this includes the Gateway Girl's or Boys Bid Event, or any Girls National Qualifier or Boys National Bid Event (with the exception of Boys 12s, 13s, and 14s, as noted in the USAV Age definition chart above). A waived team is designated as "waived" for the entirety of the season, even if the waived player(s) in question does not participate or is removed temporarily for any given event. So, a waived team is not eligible to participate in a bid-qualifying event just by dropping their waived player from the roster for that event.

Other regions may or may not accept these waivers; it is the decision of each region. Please contact individual Tournament Directors to see if they will allow age-waived players in their event.

PLEASE NOTE:

Developmental boys may apply for team waivers to play in a lower age group (Region play only, excluding the Gateway Boy's Jr National Qualifier*). If it is found that these teams are too strong for the lower age level they will be evaluated and may be required to move up to the appropriate level.

With Permission of the Junior Coordinator, In the 14s and younger age divisions, a maximum of two (2) boys are allowed on a girls' team, though the team is flagged as waived.

*Boys with age waivers are excluded from participating in the bid offering divisions of National Bid Events, including the Gateway Boy's Jr National Qualifier, at their waived age level. They may play in bid events in their true age division or higher. (*This does not apply to the B14s, B13s, or B12s; see USAV age division definition on the prior page). Junior National Qualifiers are sanctioned through USAV.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Membership will provide:

- USA Volleyball individual registration number for use on all tournament entry forms.
- USA Volleyball team registration number for use on all tournament entry forms.
- Domestic Competition Regulations (rule book) is available online.
- A liability insurance policy for sanctioned events & certificates of insurance when required.
- Organized practices that are directly under the control of a registered, background screened, IMPACT & SafeSport certified USA Volleyball coach.
- A player injury sport accident secondary policy.
- Officials' training.
- The right to enter any sanctioned USA Volleyball Tournament in any region in the United States provided the entry criteria are met.
- The right to enter any sanctioned USA Volleyball Gateway Tournament or USA Volleyball Junior National Championships in which you qualify and are accepted.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Whether coaching a state high school team, junior volleyball team, or hosting a junior tournament for high school aged girls or boys, please remember that the high school associations have certain restrictions on players, coaches, awards, clinics, camps, and all-star matches. Tournament directors and coaches must take the rules into consideration when considering USA Volleyball competition. It is imperative that USA Volleyball sanctioned coaches, teams, practices, tournaments, clinics and camps comply with these high school regulations in every aspect. **The Gateway Region and USA Volleyball do not condone any actions, whether intentional or unintentional, which may jeopardize the high school or college eligibility of these young athletes. Said actions should be referred to the applicable governing state Appeals Advisory Board for review (MSHSAA or IHSA)**

Missouri Rule Regarding Non-School Competition By-Law Standard (235.2 b) HAS BEEN ELIMINATED. All players on a non-school team MAY be comprised of members from the same school team. In the past, this By-Law did not allow a non-school volleyball team to be comprised solely of members of the same school team. Missouri has also clearly defined indoor volleyball as a distinctly different sport from beach volleyball, thereby allowing beach athlete players to participate in beach events during their HS indoor seasons.

By-Law Standard (235.2 d)

If held during the school year, but outside the designated school season for the sport, the participant shall receive no coaching from a member of the coaching staff of the school the student attends or will attend the following year. **Editor's note:** the participants in any sport may be coached, during the summer months only, by a member of the school coaching staff the participant has or will attend next year.

Illinois Rule

Illinois rules state that a player may try out for a non-school team while they are on a school team in that same sport. A player may not practice, receive instruction, participate in workouts or participate in competition with a non-school team until the school team ceases play in that sport. This means your school team has terminated for the season.

Special Note to Clubs: The offering of monies for club fees/dues or "scholarships" to athletes is not supported by the Gateway Region. Those entities offering such monies should be aware that this could affect an athlete's high school eligibility under current MSHSAA and IHSA rules and regulations. Reducing club fees due to a work program could also cause negative consequences for the athlete. Ultimately, it is up to the family to be aware of HS rules and regulations with regards to athlete eligibility.

Missouri State High School Athletic Association
1 North Keene St.
Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 875-4880

www.mshsaa.org email: email@mshsaa.org

Illinois State High School Athletic Association
2715 McGraw Dr
Bloomington, IL 61704
(309) 663-6377

www.ihsa.org email: refer to website

PLAYING WITH 5

For locally sanctioned single day GW Events, for adult men's, adult women's, junior boy's and junior girl's competition, a team may start any set with 5 players and a ghost player, regardless of reason. The 6th player can substitute in for the ghost player at any time during the set. An automatic loss of service is charged to a team and a point is awarded to the opponent at the ghost player's term of service. On the scoresheet this is indicated by recording the exit score in the appropriate service round box beneath the ghost server's player number. The service round number is not checked.

The court position vacated by the ghost player is a back row position. When a team of 7 with a Libero is reduced to 6, for any reason, the Libero will become a regular player for the remainder of that set. The player who left the set may return in any subsequent set but not in the same set.

For coed competition only, the ghost player must rotate all positions.

BOY'S PARTICIPATION IN GIRL'S TOURNAMENTS

Boy's 10s may participate in Girl's 10s, 11s, and 12s.

Boy's 11s may participate in Girl's 11s & 12s.

Boy's 12s may participate in Girl's 12s, 13s, and 14s.

Boy's 12 tournaments may accept Girl's 12s.

In the 12s and younger age divisions, a maximum of two (2) boys are allowed on a girls' team, though the team is flagged as waived. Developmental boys may apply for team waivers to play in a lower age group (Region play only, excluding any Boys National Qualifying Event or BJNC). If it is found that these teams are too strong for the lower age level, they will be evaluated and may be required to move up to the appropriate level.

BEHAVIOR FOR GATEWAY REGION TOURNAMENTS

Due to the rise in inappropriate behavior during Junior tournaments between coaches and toward officials, coaches and players, the Gateway Region will be adhering to stricter behavior policies. This policy is specifically designed to address disrespectful or inappropriate behavior among and between officials, coaches, parents, and players.

Begun in the 2020-2021 season, participants will be held to a higher standard. Gateway members will be expected to follow the Personnel Code of Ethics and USA Volleyball Participant Code of Conduct. Spectators and Parents will be expected to follow the Spectator/Parent Code of Conduct. These documents can be found in the Junior Handbook available on the Gateway web site at gatewayvb.org under Publications. It is the responsibility of the Club Directors and coaches to ensure that the players, parents and spectators are aware of these policies

Failure to abide by these policies may result in expulsion from the tournament to suspension of membership.

**** JUNIOR TEAM OFFICIALS REQUIREMENTS ****

PHILOSOPHY

The Gateway Region philosophy is to develop junior athletes as officials and as players. The Official's Board requires that all junior teams participating in Gateway Region tournaments have trained officials. Our emphasis is placed on training the teams to officiate and function as a unit rather than require individuals to be rated and certified.

Initial training is required prior to participating in any tournaments. Clinics are offered online through SportsEngine, and completion of the online clinic allows the clinic to be noted as "complete" as a credential tied to a player's profile and will appear on the SportsEngine roster. Once the player completes the junior referee requirements through SportsEngine, they will be allowed to officiate at Gateway Region sanctioned events. This training **MUST** be completed by each player on a team before they are allowed to officiate at a Gateway Region sanctioned event.

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

Each participating team is required to have a minimum of one 1st Referee, one 2nd Referee, one Scorer (recommended to have an assistant scorer to track the Libero and aid with the visual score) and two Line Judges in attendance at every tournament. A maximum of four people are allowed at the scorer's table:

scorer, flipper, libero tracker and a coach who is supervising. These officials need to officiate during any pool play or tournament playoff match.

TEAM FEES

If teams do not have certified officials for matches they are scheduled to officiate, they will pay a fee of **\$60** per official needed. This non-refundable fee is paid to the Tournament Director, who will then ensure there are certified officials to officiate at that time. Adult officials who work junior events must be background screened. It is recommended that each certified replacement official receive \$20 per match. This fee does not "buy" the rest of the officiating team. The team that is scheduled to officiate must still provide line judges and a visual score operator.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

Two Steps to Complete Junior Team Officiating Requirements:

- 1) - Individual Players & Coaches complete one or both Online Referee and Scorekeeper Clinic Modules thru SportsEngine. Credentials will be added to each player's profile upon successful completion of the coursework.
- 2) - Teams/Club arrange a scrimmage that involves at least 3 teams (2 to play, 1 to officiate). A club director must email Danielle Huskey at dhuskey.gatewayvb@gmail.com to electronically confirm that their club has completed their practical evaluation for their team(s). By acknowledging the completion of their club's officiating practical, they are assuming responsibility that their teams are competent officiating crews. Reports to the region office of repeated poor officiating during the season may result in sanctions against the club.

CLINICS

- Since all coursework for Junior Referee and Junior Scorekeeper Modules may be accessed online, the Region no longer has approved Clinicians, and no longer provides Practical Evaluations.

PRACTICAL EVALUATIONS

- Practical evaluations must be conducted in a gymnasium during a game situation. (Minimum of 18 participants required. Two (2) teams playing and one (1) team officiating).
- An adult representative of the club should make arrangements within the club's schedule to ensure their teams have completed the online Officiating Modules, and this in-person Practical. By acknowledging the completion of their club's officiating practical, they are assuming responsibility that their teams are competent officiating crews. Reports to the region office of repeated poor officiating during the season may result in sanctions against the club.

JUNIOR OFFICIATING POLICIES

- When players are officiating (at any age level), it will be standard and mandatory protocol that the officiating team's coach, assistant coach, or rostered certified adult be part of the officiating team or remain at the scorer's table throughout the entire officiating assignment. Coaches, parents and all others are not allowed to stand on/at the referee stand with the referee during junior events.

Tournament Directors may allow coaches to remain courtside if not directly at the scorer table at their discretion.

- A **maximum** of four people are allowed at the scorer's table: scorer, flipper, libero tracker and coach or assistant coach who is supervising.
- Members of the officiating team may not use any electronic devices (including, but not limited to cell phones and I-pods) during their officiating assignment, except for the purpose of timing warm-ups. Officiating members found using electronic devices during a match will be subject to a five-point penalty assessed to the first set of their next match.
- A Junior Official's Mentoring Program has been implemented for Girls and Boys 11s & 12s age divisions. When available, the region will provide one Mentor per court to assist/critique the officiating throughout the pool play and then referee the playoff matches on their court. Adult Mentors must be current USAV members, have a current background screen, and be SafeSport Certified. If no mentors are at a tournament, only the aforementioned adults or juniors 15 years or older, are allowed to be the first referee; exceptions must be approved by the Tournament Director. **If no mentors are available, region offices will notify Tournament Directors by Wednesday prior to the scheduled event, and those Tournament Directors may search and arrange their own mentors with approval of those proposed mentors by the Gateway Region office.**
- If a junior player is refereeing a playoff match, the Tournament Director has the authority to replace that official if deemed necessary, unless the player is an adult certified referee.

PLAYOFF REQUIREMENTS

- Teams not participating in playoffs cannot be required to perform any officiating duties in playoffs.
- Teams that advance to playoffs and then cannot continue playing for any reason must still fulfill any officiating duty required of the losing team in bracket play.
- It is the responsibility of the individual teams to check the standings for playoff berths and/or officiating duties.

TEAM PENALTIES

- Written reports of repeated unsatisfactory officiating will result in a review by the Officials' Board or their designee and another practical clinic may be required. If subsequent practical clinics are required, a \$75 fee per clinic must be paid to the Region. This fee will cover the costs associated with the clinic.
- Continued problems may result in team suspensions.
- Teams that arrive late for officiating duties will be charged a \$100 fine, payable to the Tournament Director to pay the replacement officials (1st Referee, 2nd Referee and Scorer paid \$20 each, the visual Scorer, each line judge, and the Tournament Director paid \$10 each). In addition, the team will be penalized one point per minute late in the next set up to a maximum of one set.
- Teams that do not stay for officiating assignments will be fined \$150 payable to the Gateway Region to, in part, pay the replacement officials (1st Referee, 2nd Referee and Scorer paid \$20 each, each line judge and the visual Scorer paid \$10 each, Tournament Director paid \$20 and \$40 to the Gateway Region).
- Teams with outstanding fines may not participate in any sanctioned USAV event until all debts are paid.

JUNIOR TEAM RANKINGS

In an effort to place regional teams in their correct order when seeding events, the USAV National Office has asked all regions to provide a list of junior teams ranked by strength. This list is also helpful to Gateway tournament directors when seeding events within our region. The girl's first rankings of each season will be posted in early March and will be updated frequently as additional results are processed. We will discontinue updating the ranking list at the time of seeding for the Gateway Girl's Bid Event. **Seeding will NOT be switched at the Bid Event to avoid club conflict.**

The ranking system used is based on head-to-head game record of teams within the same age level. Results from competition between two Gateway teams played outside the region, will be included provided the results are verified online or by a rep/coach from both teams. This information can be emailed to Danielle Huskey at dhuskey.gatewayvb@gmail.com. No results are considered when a team's opponent is from a higher or lower age level. Playing more tournaments within the correct level will contribute to the accuracy of each team's rank.

GATEWAY REGION EVENTS

The Gateway Region hosts several junior events during the season. Events include, but are not limited to, the Dennis Lafata Gateway Boy's National Qualifier, Boy's and Girl's Regional Championships, Coed U10 Regional Festival, and the Girl's Bid Event. There are specific entry processes, region regulations and policies governing each of these events. Refer to each event page of the GW website for details.

All Gateway Region Indoor Boys and Girls events are hosted through AES. This includes Winter Kickoff, League, League Bid Weekend, All Regionals, Gateway Region Girls Bid Events, and the Dennis Lafata Boys National Bid Event. The Gateway Beach Open, Beach Regional Championships, Spikin It, Gateway Beach Regional Fall Classic, and Blocktoberfest are all hosted through VolleyballLife.

The Dennis Lafata Boys Jr National Qualifier is a three-day USAV Boys National Qualifier held in February where winners may earn Open and USA bids to the Boy's Junior National Championships.

The Gateway Boys HS Regional Championships are held the first weekend of January. **The Gateway Boys MS Regional Championships** are held in early March in St. Louis. *These events will follow the same 2-day format as Girls Regionals - day one pool play, Day two 2-match minimum bracket play.* This event may offer ALL age divisions, instead of just even age divisions, if numbers justify 2-day stand-alone divisions. There will be a minimum 4 teams in an age division to host a stand-alone division. If an "odd" age division does not meet the minimum 4 teams, the teams will be rolled up into the next highest "even" age division. If an "even" age division does not meet a minimum 4 teams, the next lowest "odd" age division will be rolled up into the "even" age division. *The HS division of this event will award 1 American Bid in the 16s and 18s boys divisions for the USAV BJNC.*

The Gateway Girls Regional Championships are held over multiple weekends in Late March and/or April and are divided into a Gold/Silver level and a Bronze/Copper level. **Waivered teams may participate in the appropriate level of their choice.** All registered Gateway teams may participate in Regionals provided that the requirements specific to each Championship are met.* The AES system will break all ties. *Tie Break sets will not be used at Junior Regionals since all teams advance to playoffs.*

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

The Gateway League and League Bid Weekend is a 6-day progressive event that takes place over the course of 3 weekends in January and February. It comprises 4 days (2 weekends) of inter-age group play, and concludes with a final 2-day “League Bid Weekend” of own-age group play. Teams may register for just the 1st four days, last 2 days, or all 6 days of competition. The League Bid Weekend (last 2 days) will award the Region’s allocated Freedom Bid for girls 14-17s age divisions. For 2025-26, the League Bid Weekend will be held at the St. Louis Convention Center alongside the Dennis Lafata Boys National Qualifier. The League Bid Weekend will follow the Girls Regional Championships 2-day format with pool play day 1, and 2-match minimum bracket play day 2. *The Freedom Bid from this event for girls 14-17s will continue to trickle down within this event UNTIL the Friday prior to the Donna Mayer Gateway 11-17s Bid Event, at which time, if the Freedom Bid is brought into the event, it will trickle down within the Donna Mayer Gateway Bid Event.*

The Gateway Beach Open is held over Memorial Day Weekend and is a 1 or 2-day Beach National Qualifier. Doubles teams compete for Open National Bids to the USAV Junior Beach National Championships. This event is open to any eligible member of USAV.

The Gateway Beach Regional Championship are held in Mid June and is a 1-day Regional Bid Event. Doubles teams compete for Regional National Bids to the USAV Junior Beach National Championships. Girls for these 2 events must be Gateway Region members; however, boys outside the region may participate, as long as they are USAV members.

The Gateway Beach Regional Fall Classic is held in late August and is a 1-day Regional Bid Event. Doubles teams compete for Regional National Bids to the USAV Junior Beach National Championships for the 2026 season. Girls for these 2 events must be Gateway Region members; however, boys outside the region may participate, as long as they are USAV members.

Spikin It is held mid July and is primarily an adult grass event that also hosts junior divisions.

Blocktoberfest is held early October and is primarily an adult grass event that also hosts junior divisions.

The **Donna Mayer Gateway Girls Bid Event** is split into an 18’s weekend, and an 11-17’s weekend. This split was made in 2023 to accommodate the 18s Spring GJNC, and facility availability. The purpose of this event is to award the Region’s bids to the USAV Girl’s 18s Junior National Championships. **Only teams that have met the additional prerequisite entry requirements for the Girls Junior National Championships and the Gateway Bid Event may participate.***** All Bids for girls 18s will be awarded at this single event - the final Bid Weekend of Gateway League, which coincides with the Saturday and Sunday of the Dennis Lafata Boys National Qualifier. All Girls 18s will enter pool play on day 1, based on seeding from the previous 4 days of league competition. Pool finishes will determine teams moving to gold or silver. The Girls 18s Gold division will play down a traditional double elimination bracket on their final day of play. The Girls 18s Silver division will play a 2-match minimum bracket. *If a team enters a Gateway Bid Event and refuses to accept the bid the final day of the tournament, the following penalties will be applied: The entire club, club director, head coach, and all adult members listed on the roster will be banned from Region qualifying events, for the rest of the remaining season and next season, and will be noted on the website and the club information page.*

Continued from 24-25 season - As a format change to alleviate the number of matches played in a row, the Girls 11-17s bid event in the spring will be scheduled to take place over the course of 2 weekends. If

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

a division has more than 16 eligible and registered teams, then Weekend 1 will be a double elimination format for all seeds 11 and higher. The 1st weekend divisions will play down to seeds 11 and 12, and will advance to weekend 2. Weekend 2 will be a double elimination bracket between 12 and 16 teams played down over 2 days. Day 1 will play the bracket down to the top 8 teams, eliminating seeds 9 and higher. Day 2 will continue the double elimination bracket for the final 8 teams, and will play out the 5/6th place match, and potentially the 7/8th place match. Seeding will NOT be switched at the Bid Event to avoid club conflict.

Additional GW Region Girls Bid Event Notes:

*****All 11-17s Teams that enter the GW Girls Bid Event, must participate in a minimum of 2 GW sanctioned tournaments of the team's age level before the entry deadline. All 18s teams that enter the GW Girls Bid Weekend must participate in a minimum of 1 GW sanctioned tournament of the 18s age level before the noted entry deadline. Because of the inter-age group play of the current Gateway League format, only playing the final 2 days (League Bid Weekend) guarantee's results against teams of your own age group, so if a team plays all 6 days of league, or just the final 2 days, the event will count as 2 region sanctioned tournaments. Playing just the 1st 4 days alone will not count towards any region sanctioned tournaments, unless scheduling proof is provided thru AES. For their league participation to count as 1 region sanctioned event, they must have played between 4-8 matches against teams of their own age group during the 1st four days of league. For their league participation to count as 2 region sanctioned events, they must have played between 9-12 matches against teams of their own age group during the 1st four days of league.**

For junior tournaments, the Gateway Region has set a limit of 4 teams per court with a maximum \$150 per team entry fee for a sanctioned one-day self-ref tournament. For junior tournaments that guarantee a certified 1st official (R1), a sanctioned one-day tournament may charge a maximum of \$250 per team entry. For adult tournaments, 4 or 5 team pools are allowed with a maximum \$150 per team entry fee.

Charging a service fee is allowed when using credit card payment for entry fees; however, teams must still be given the option to pay by cash or check with no additional service fee included.

There will be no parking fee charged at any Gateway Region sanctioned event unless a sanction exception has been obtained by the Commissioner. Events held at the St Louis Convention Center may charge an admission fee with approval of the Commissioner.

Beginning in the 2021-2022 Season, Event Directors may choose to charge an admission fee to spectators at local tournaments. An admission fee is considered a deviation from a standard tournament, and the exact fee must be noted on the sanction form. There may be no charge to rostered players or coaches participating in the event. It is recommended not to charge more than \$5 per day and not to charge children 5 and under.

If a Tournament Director is owed tournament entry fees by a Gateway registered club/team/individual (or person acting in this capacity) and the region office can confirm the debt owed, the entity owing the debt is not in good standing and ineligible to participate in USAV sanctioned events until the debt is paid. This does not include a situation where the Tournament Director has failed to collect entry fees prior to the team's participation.

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

Tournament Directors may apply for a sanction exception (e.g., higher entry fee, non-standard format or cost deviations, Invitational entry, charging of an admission fee, etc.). In cases where a higher entry fee is requested, justification for such an increase must be shown (e.g., higher entry fee, standard format deviations, charging of an admission fee, etc.). If a sanction exception is granted the Tournament Director must inform teams of the deviations from the standard guidelines. This must be done upon receipt of entry or before, so the team can decide if they wish to enter the tournament.

If a team withdraws from a tournament and a replacement team cannot be found, the Tournament Director may elect to keep that team's entry fee. Teams withdrawing from a tournament for any reason may not participate in another Gateway Region tournament on that same weekend.

Tournament Directors may keep 25% of a team's entry fee if a team chooses not to participate in a tournament due to dangerous travel conditions caused by bad weather or sweeping acts of God. The team rep should notify the tournament director as soon as the decision is made not to attend the event. Any disputes related to this issue will be resolved by the Gateway Region Executive Board.

If a Tournament Director cancels an event for any reason, a team's total entry fee must be refunded. The only exception is if a Tournament Director is forced to cancel a tournament/division due to dropped teams, resulting in less than the minimum number of teams needed to run that tournament/division. He/she is then only required to refund the entry fee to the teams that have not dropped from the tournament. Refunds will be issued and postmarked within 14 days of event cancellation.

A Tournament Director that is forced to cancel a tournament due to weather or act of God may elect to reschedule the event. That tournament director may hold onto entry fees until they reschedule the event. If a team is no longer able to play on the rescheduled day, or their season has concluded before a rescheduled date has been announced, that team is entitled to a full refund. **Refunds will be issued and postmarked within 14 days from when a team informs the tournament director that the re-schedule date will not work, or their season has concluded.**

After the tournament has been sanctioned, if a Tournament Director loses the courts, he/she has 2 weeks to find replacement courts. If courts have not been found within the 2-week period, the sanction will be withdrawn and the tournament will be canceled. Any tournament entries and fees must be returned to teams entered. Outstanding circumstances may be referred to the Executive Board to render mediation.

Sometimes changes are made in tournament plans, and the upcoming tournament no longer matches what was approved on the tournament sanction form. In this case the Tournament Director MUST contact the Gateway Office immediately. Any change of location or format must be reported to and approved by Gateway Region Staff for validation.

Any Tournament Cancellation must be reported to Office Staff dhuskey.gatewayvb@gmail.com within 7 days of the tournament date to be eligible for sanction fee refund.

If a Tournament Director sanctions a tournament and the entry fee reflects the provision of 1st officials, teams should expect that 1st officials will be provided throughout that tournament. If a team is without a paid 1st official, the Tournament Director shall refund the difference between the entry fee and the maximum fee of \$150 to each team affected. Refunds will be issued and postmarked within 14 days of the event.

If a Tournament Director owes fees, confirmed by the Gateway Office, to any party and does not pay in a timely manner then they are no longer in good standing, and may not be permitted to participate in or host any USAV sanctioned events for the remainder of the current season and the following season. See p. 2 for the policy regarding fees owed to facilities.

ENTRY TO USA GIRLS' JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (GJNC)

Due to the high number of teams that want to participate in the GJNC, teams must earn a bid into the GJNC in all eligible girls divisions. Entry process details are listed in the Pre-Tournament Manual located on the USA Volleyball website: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/events/girls-indoor>. For a team to be eligible the entry process must be completed and the appropriate forms in the Gateway Office by the deadlines posted on the Gateway web page. Late entries may be processed, but there are no guarantees that the team will be eligible for the GJNC. Some general policies regarding the bid process are as follows.

- I. Girl's teams interested in playing in the **Open, USA & Liberty Divisions** must attend one of the USAV Junior National Qualifiers. A schedule of these events is listed on the USA Volleyball web page. Teams who forfeit bids earned at a Qualifier will be subject to penalties imposed by USA Volleyball. If a team qualifies for the JNC at one of the Qualifying Tournaments, individual players are frozen on that team's roster for the Gateway Bid Event. Teams that have participated in the Open Division at a Qualifier(s) but did not earn a bid may still be eligible for an "At-Large" Open bid. The At Large application process is detailed in the USAV Pre-Tournament Manual. Bids are awarded based on results submitted.
- II. The Gateway Region is guaranteed entries into three separate **Club Divisions**: the **National** Division G18-11s, the **American** Division G18-12s, & the **Freedom** Division G18-14s. (excluding the 10s and 8s programs). Each region in the country with a minimum of 200 registered junior girls from the prior season receives one bid into the National Division. American Division bids are allocated to regions based on the total number of girls registered from the prior season. Freedom Division mirrors the National Division allocations. Generally, the larger regions receive at least one American Division bid while the smaller regions do not receive any bids. The highest finisher in the Gateway Girl's Bid Event will be awarded the National Bid; the next finisher will be awarded the American Bid/s, and the next finisher will be awarded the Freedom Bid. Bids into the USA, Liberty, and American Divisions (and 12s National Division) may also be earned through the National Qualifiers.
- III. Additional GJNC club division bids may be reallocated to Gateway if other regions return their bids to the pool. Again, these bids will be offered to teams based on their having completed the entry process and their finish in the Gateway Bid Event.

NOTES:

- Any team entering the GJNC will be totally responsible for their own entry fees and expenses.
- If a team applies for entry into the GJNC, earns a bid at the Gateway Bid Event and chooses to not take the bid, they must be prepared to forfeit their entry fee and may be subject to

additional penalties by USA Volleyball. The highest ranked team not accepting the bid will be responsible for the fee and possible penalties.

If your team is interested in qualification or entry procedures for this event, consult the USAV web page: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/events/girls-indoor> or contact the Gateway Region Office.

ENTRY TO USA BOYS' JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (BJNC)

Entry process details are listed in the Pre-Tournament manual posted on the USA Volleyball web page: <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Events/Boys-Indoor>. For a team to be eligible the entry process must be complete and the appropriate forms in the Gateway Office by the deadlines posted on the Gateway web page. Late entries may be processed, but there are no guarantees that the team will be eligible for the BJNC. Some general policies regarding the bid process are as follows:

- I. The Boy's JNC will offer an Open & USA Division in the 18, 17, 16, 15 and 14 age levels. Teams may earn a position into the Open Division based on their performance in designated Bid Tournaments (such as the Gateway Boy's Festival in February) offered throughout the country. Check the USAV web page for a list of these events. "At Large" bids will also be available for teams that have completed the At Large application process and awarded primarily based on team strength.
- II. USA Volleyball recently began the process of implementing a new Regional American division at the BJNC in the 16s and 18s age group. This American division is a bid division awarded within each region.
- III. A Club Division is offered in the 12 – 18 age levels. Entries for the boy's event are lower than the girl's; therefore, teams that have completed all entry requirements by the deadlines have historically been accepted. However, if a club division is oversubscribed, date of entry is the current criteria being used to determine the field.

If your team is interested in qualification or entry procedures for this event, consult the USAV web page, <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball/Events/Boys-Indoor> or contact the Gateway Region Office.

NOTE: Any team entering the BJNC will be totally responsible for their own entry fees and expenses.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Parent, I will:

- Remain in the spectator areas during all games.
Not advise the coach on how to coach, who to put in the game and/or who to take out of the game.
- Respect the integrity of the officials and not advise them how to call the match.
- Model sportsmanship for my child by treating all coaches, officials, tournament directors and players of either team with courtesy and respect.
- Not coach my child during the game.
- Applaud good and fair play during matches.
- Be in control of my emotions.
- Learn the rules of the game to help me better understand what is happening on the court.
- Understand that physical or verbal intimidation of any individual is unacceptable behavior
- Protect the ability to continue using the facility by following all the rules of the facility, such as NO FOOD, DRINK OR COOLERS IN THE GYM, OR RESTRICTED AREAS, smoking in designated areas only, throwing all trash in an appropriate receptacle, etc.
- Understand it is a privilege NOT a right to attend volleyball matches.
- Understand that poor or unsportsmanlike conduct, language, or behavior may warrant and justify my removal from the premises by the tournament director, site director, venue manager, or other authorities.

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct that:

- **I may have to leave the facility**
- **My child's team may be penalized for my behavior**

Parent Signature



JUNIOR CLUB PERSONNEL CODE OF ETHICS

It is the duty and obligation of USA Volleyball affiliated Junior Club Program administrators, directors, coaches and other club personnel to assure the following Code of Ethics is followed and adhered to by all individuals who have an active role in a USA Volleyball Junior Club Program in any Region of USA Volleyball.

In a continuing effort to promote safe, healthy, and ethical communication, relationships and treatment of all USA Volleyball players and personnel, all adults associated with junior club program must read, accept and submit this Code of Ethics before they are eligible to actively participate in a junior club program associated, affiliated, or participating in USA Volleyball.

1. All adult club personnel affiliated with a junior program must be a registered member with a Region of USA Volleyball and USA Volleyball.
2. All Adult club personnel including coaches, chaperones, assistant coaches, trainers, etc. affiliated with a junior program intending to participate in USA Volleyball must have an approved and current background screen on file as per USA Volleyball policy. It is intended that the term "all adult club personnel" be all inclusive and not limited to only those categories identified herein.
3. A head coach or assistant coach affiliated with a junior program must also: be an adult (see Region definition of an adult) and be IMPACT certified according to USA Volleyball and Region policies.
4. If allowed by Region rules, an assistant coach who has not yet met the age of majority in the state of residence must be supervised by a head coach recognized by the Region and must meet all applicable Region and USA Volleyball requirements. Individuals who are registered as junior players and also have an interest in coaching should contact their region regarding coaching eligibility.
5. Responsibilities:
 - a. A head coach or other equally qualified club personnel must be present at all practices and competitions. A head coach, adult club representative personnel or registered chaperone must be present during team-supervised travel. This individual shall be responsible for the moral, legal and ethical well-being for each participant during team/club activities.
 - b. Coaches shall understand the unique power of a coach-athlete relationship. Coaches and all other club personnel shall not exploit athletes and shall avoid any relationships which could compromise the integrity of the learning and participation process, impair the professional judgment and/or take advantage of a situation for their own personal gain or gratification.
 - c. All club personnel must understand that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment of a current or former athlete are unethical and illegal even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Club personnel shall not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with current athletes or other participants over whom there is/was authority. See B above.
 - d. All club personnel shall insure that all individuals have met all Regional Volleyball Association and USA Volleyball membership requirements prior to participation in any club, team and/or Region/National USA Volleyball activity.
 - e. All club personnel must inform the players and their parent(s)/guardian(s) about any Region and/or USA Volleyball transfer policy. This policy may restrict or prohibit a participant from transferring to another club or team if specified criteria have not been met. Likewise, all club personnel must inform the players and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of any rules or policies regarding coaching transfers during a particular season.

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

- f. All club personnel shall abide by and inform the players and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of applicable regional recruiting policies.
- g. All club personnel may not participate in, require another individual to participate in, or condone any act considered to be illegal under federal, state, or local laws and/or ordinances.
- h. All club personnel shall strive to educate their athletes and personnel to respect, honor and adhere to the rules of the facility being used during practices, tournaments, or events. In this regard, the rules of the facility shall have priority over the rules of the Regional Volleyball Association.
- i. All club personnel shall ensure that all activities are suitable for the age, experience and ability of their athletes.
- j. All club personnel shall seek professional medical advice when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue training or playing.
- k. All club personnel shall, while serving in a professional capacity, avoid any drug, tobacco or alcohol use while in the presence of athletes.
- l. All club personnel shall not supply or condone the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, ammunition, firearms, knives or any item or material that can be used as a weapon, to any of the participants or athletes and shall report any athlete using or in the possession of the same.
- m. All club personnel shall not allow, encourage, condone, or require any behavior that threatens an athlete's amateur status or Regional, USA Volleyball, school and/or collegiate eligibility.
- n. All club personnel shall maintain all relationships with other club personnel on a professional and confidential basis.
- o. All club personnel must be positive role models. This includes being courteous, respectful and polite to players, parents, other coaches, club directors, event personnel, and officials.
- p. All club personnel will not engage in any physical, verbal, or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or coercion of current and/or former athletes.
- q. All club personnel will immediately report any suspected case of illegal activity, abuse, assault, harassment, or ethical violations of this club personnel code of ethics to the appropriate authorities, including Regional Volleyball Administrators.

Any violation of this Code may result in sanction(s) being issued against the club representative, the individual(s) and the club/team involved. These sanctions may extend to the loss of eligibility of the club representative, the individual(s), the entire club and the team involved.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the statements in this Code of Ethics.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

(On Behalf of Minor Applicant) Print Name: _____

****USA VOLLEYBALL CODE OF CONDUCT****

The Following Actions are PROHIBITED:

1. Violation of any anti-doping policies, protocols or procedures as defined by the International Olympic Committee (IOC; www.olympic.org), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA; www.wada-ama.org), Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB; www.fivb.org), US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA; www.usada.org) or the United States Olympic Committee (USOC; www.teamusa.org). Violations of this provision will be adjudicated only by USADA or the proper anti-doping authority, not USA Volleyball (USAV).
2. Violation of Safe Sport rules, policies and procedures promulgated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport (www.safesport.org), as they may be amended from time to time.
3. Possession, consumption of distribution of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices or e-cigarettes if illegal or in violation of USAV or Regional Volleyball Association (RVA) policy.
4. USAV policy prohibits the possession, consumption of distribution of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices or e-cigarettes by anyone registered as a junior volleyball player at the event venue of any USAV/RVA sanctioned junior event.
5. Use of a recognized identification card by anyone other than the individual described on the card.
6. Physical damage to a facility or theft of items from a room, dormitory, residence or other person (Restitution will be part of any penalty imposed.)
7. Possession of fireworks, ammunition, firearms, or other weapons or any item or material which by commonly accepted practices and principles would be a hazard or harmful to other persons at USAV/RVA sanctioned events.
8. Any action considered to be an offense under Federal, State or local law ordinances.
9. Violation of the specific policies, regulations, and/or procedures of the USAV, RVA or the facility used in conjunction with a sanctioned event. (It is the responsibility of the individual to be familiar with applicable specific policies, regulations and procedures.)
10. Conduct which is inappropriate as determined by comparison to normally accepted behavior.
11. Physical or verbal intimidation of any individual.
12. Actions that will be detrimental to USAV or the RVA

First	Before or During Event	Individual disqualified (if person is a junior, he/she will be sent home as soon as possible and parent or guardian notified). The individual may be declared ineligible for USAV registration or RVA membership for one year starting from the date of infraction.
	After event concludes	The individual may be declared ineligible for USAV registration or RVA membership for one year starting from the date of infraction
Second	Before or During Event	Individual disqualified (if person is a junior, he/she will be sent home as soon as possible and parent or guardian notified). The individual may be declared ineligible for USAV registration or RVA membership for two years starting from the date of infraction.
	After event concludes	The individual may be declared ineligible for USAV registration or RVA membership for two years starting from the date of infraction.
Third		Individual may be declared ineligible for USAV registration or RVA membership for the remainder of his/her lifetime.
Note:		Major misbehavior (e.g. verbal or physical abuse of a child, sexual harassment, etc.) may subject the violator to a lifetime ineligibility for USAV registration or RVA membership after the first infraction.

Sanctions are applied after affording the participant due process that may be required by the Ted Steves Olympic and Amateur Sports Act (TSOASA, USAC, USAV, and RVA. Appeals, other than for doping violations and matters under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport, may be made in accordance with procedures set forth in the bylaws and operating codes of USA Volleyball and the RVA respectively. USADA and the U.S. Center for SafeSport retain the sole ability to determine any and all sanctions in those matters under their respective and exclusive jurisdictions.

I have read and understand the USA Volleyball Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies
 I agree and consent to abide by the USA Volleyball Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policies and other region-specific code of conducts and/or disciplinary policies.
 I understand that, if I violate the USAV and/or RVA Codes of Conduct, I might be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with USAV and/or RVA Disciplinary Policies.

Participant's Signature (regardless of age) _____ Date Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (if registrant is under 18 years of age): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

Social Media and Electronic Communication Minimally Required Policy for Clubs

Model Policy for Junior Club Volleyball Programs

USA Volleyball junior clubs are now required to implement an electronic communication policy. The policy must be reviewed with and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults affiliated with the Club. The following is a model policy for appropriate electronic communications between adults and athletes and is provided to assist USA Volleyball member clubs with developing their own policies. It a Club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written electronic communication policy, the following model policy will become the default electronic communication policy for that club. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by the club, the default policy will no longer apply. Each member club has the responsibility for approval and implementation of its own electronic communication policy.

Electronic Communication Policy of [insert club name]

PURPOSE

[Insert club name] (the “Club” recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our student athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communication between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities and it is mandated to include the parents/guardians. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Volleyball Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication shall not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use.
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language, sexual activity
- The adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.
- Note: any communication concerning an athlete’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.
- Any derogatory remarks about players, parents or coaches.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something you would be

comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with athletes is **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes shall be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choice, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

In your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely your method and manner of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from any athlete. In addition, a coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM methods.

If the club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "like" or "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

X (formally "twitter")

Best Practice: The club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

Alternative Option: Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 10pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent/guardian must be copied along with another coach or club administrator.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents of guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communications. Immediate compliance without repercussion must be granted.

MISCONDUCT

Because social media and electronic communications can be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing), such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our SafeSport Handbook.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of the Club's Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy should be reported to your immediate supervisor, a Club administrator or the Regional SafeSport Contact for evaluation of complaints and allegations.

A USA Volleyball participant or parent of a participant who violates this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to: suspension, permanent suspension and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

Travel Sample Policy for Clubs

Model Policy for Junior Club Volleyball Programs

USA Volleyball junior Clubs are now required to implement a team travel policy. The following is a model team travel policy and is provided to assist USA Volleyball member clubs with developing their own policies. If a club chooses not to, or is unable to, create a written travel policy, the following model policy will become the default policy for that Club. Once a customized set of policies is developed and approved by the club, the default policy will no longer apply. Each member club has the responsibility for approval and implementation of its own set of travel policies, and to provide these policies to all players, parents, coaches and other adults who will be traveling with a team. It is strongly recommended that a signature by each adult acknowledging receipt of and agreeing to the travel policy be obtained by each club.

Some travel involves only local travel to and from local practices and events while other travel involves overnight stays. Different policies should apply to these two types of travel. The form of policy below is a sample only but may be modified by the local program to meet its specific needs and travel.

Travel Policy for [insert club name]

[Insert club name] has some teams that travel regularly to play in tournaments, has some teams where travel is limited to a few events per season, and some teams where there is no travel other than local travel to and from our own area. [Club] prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Volleyball SafeSport Handbook. [Club] has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of abuse or misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase player safety and improve the player's experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

Local Travel

Local travel occurs when [Club] does not sponsor, coordinate or arrange for travel.

- Players and/or their parents/guardian are responsible for making all arrangements for local travel. The team and its coaches, managers or administrators should avoid responsibility for arranging or coordinating local travel. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure the person transporting the minor player maintains the proper safety and legal requirements, including but not limited to: a valid driver's license, automobile liability insurance, a vehicle in safe working order and compliance with applicable state laws.
- The employees, coaches and/or volunteers of [Club] or one of its teams, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor player.

Team Travel

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when [Club] or one of its teams or designees sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that the team can compete locally, regionally, or

nationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the players.

- When possible, [Club] will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person with [Club] or the team. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm your intention to travel and to help with travel details.
- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).
- The coach or his/her designee will establish a curfew by when all players must be in their hotel rooms or in a supervised location. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be made of each room by at least two properly background screened adults. At no time should only one adult be present in a room with minor players, regardless of gender.
- Team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels for player-only rooms.
- Individual meetings between a coach and a player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in public settings or with additional adults present, with at least one of those adults being the same gender as the player.
- Family members who wish to stay in the team hotel are permitted and encouraged to do so.
- The team will make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent. If any special arrangements are necessary for your child, please contact the team personnel who can either make or assist with making those arrangements.
- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.
- In all cases involving travel, parents have the right to transport their minor player.
- Prior to any travel, coaches will endeavor to make players and parents aware of all expectations and rules. Coaches will also support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of the players for adherence to curfew restrictions and other travel rules.
- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, then except where immediate action is necessary, parents will be notified before any action is taken, or immediately after.

Suggest Additional Policies

The following policies are additional guidelines for developing a travel policy based on the club's preferences and needs.

- Players are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Players are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, restaurant or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., players will stay in groups of no less than three persons. Athletes 12 and under will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- Safety Policies
 - Additional Guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches.

- o Supervised team room provided for relaxation and recreation.
- o Respect the privacy of each other.
- o Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances.
- o Must wear seatbelts and remain seated in vehicles.
- Behavior Policies
 - o Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in the hotel.
 - o Be prompt and on time.
 - o Develop cell phone usage guidelines.
 - o Develop computer usage guidelines including social media.
 - o Respect travel vehicles.
 - o Establish travel dress code.
 - o Use appropriate behavior in public facilities, including language.
 - o Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out.
 - o Must stay in assigned hotel room; and
 - o Needs and well-being of the team come first
- Financial
 - o No room service without permission.
 - o Players are responsible for all incidental charges.
 - o Players are responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel.
 - o Players must participate in contracted group meals; and
 - o Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies.
- General
 - o Establish fair trip eligibility requirements.
 - o Establish age guidelines for travel trips.
 - o Parent(s) are responsible for getting player(s) to stated departure point; and
 - o Requirements for families to attend “Team Travel Tournaments.”

Code of Conduct / Honor Code

USA Volleyball strongly suggests clubs to create a Code of Conduct or Honor Code as a companion document to team travel policies.

Recommended:

- Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrator, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- The possession, use or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- Team members are reminded that when competing in tournaments, traveling on trips, and attending other club-related functions, they are representing both themselves and [Club]. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club.

For consideration:

- Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
 - Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense.
 - Disqualification from future tournaments, either local or traveling.
 - Financial penalties.
 - Dismissal from team; and/or
 - Penalties set forth in the USA Volleyball Participant Code of Conduct, which may include a lifetime ban.
- Players are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities.
- Players are to refrain from the use of inappropriate language.

****GATEWAY REGION USAV DUE PROCESS****

PURPOSE

If an individual is suspected of wrongdoing within a Regional volleyball context where a sanction or penalty may be necessary, due process involves the right of the individual to present his/her side of the story, to receive fair consideration and to have the opportunity to have the Region's decision reconsidered by a higher authority. Gateway's due process guidelines were developed to:

1. Ensure that Region members are treated fairly.
2. Render consistent treatment of members within the Region.
3. Increase the probability that Region decisions will be upheld on appeal within USA Volleyball; and
4. Form a foundation of comprehensive factual information that would be necessary in the event of any legal action.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE PROCESS

Gateway members have an obligation to be familiar with the rules, guidelines and ethics codes of the Gateway Region and USA Volleyball. Neither lack of awareness, nor misunderstanding of a rule or standard is a defense to a charge of wrongdoing. When a member is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate policy or ethics, he or she must consult with knowledgeable authorities. [The Commissioner, any member of the Region Board and any member of the Gateway Region Office staff may submit a complaint on behalf of the Region.](#)

When a member believes that there may have been a violation of policy or ethics by another member, he or she should attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of the other member, if an informal resolution appears appropriate and when intervention does not violate any member rights.

If you feel a violation is not appropriate for informal resolution or if informal resolution did not resolve the violation properly, you may file an official grievance. The steps for this process are:

1. [Contact Chris Clauss at cmwarner24@gmail.com.](mailto:cmwarner24@gmail.com)
2. Submit a [detailed](#) written complaint summarizing the violation [to Chris Clauss or through the SportsEngine contact form](#) ~~to the Gateway Region Office or an Executive Board member,~~ [the](#) which complaint should include the following information:
 - a. Your name, phone number and email address.
 - b. Identity of the club and club representative in violation.
 - c. Description of the violation; and
 - d. Contact information for any witnesses to the violation and any supporting documentation from witnesses, if available.

Members of the Gateway Region must cooperate in investigations, proceedings and resulting sanctions and other requirements. Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation.

Members of the Gateway Region should not file complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to protect the public.

DUE PROCESS GUIDELINES

The Executive Board is charged with the primary responsibility of judicial consideration relating to:

1. Violations of the USAV Participant Code of Conduct set forth on the Gateway Region Individual Membership Form.
2. All club, team and individual eligibility matters; and
3. Any other matter of ethics pertaining to participation in Gateway Region events or activities.

PROCESS OF ADJUDICATION

I. VIOLATIONS

All violations, general and specific, committed by registered members will be categorized according to the following schedule:

A. Category I Violations

Minor incidents for which an automatic penalty, fine or sanction may be imposed under applicable Region policies. Examples include, but are not limited to, failure to complete officiating duties at a tournament, failure to have certified officials by specified dates, and failure to wear proper uniforms at a tournament.

B. Category II Violations

Incidents involving misconduct. Examples include, but are not limited to, improper recruiting (undue pressure, false promises, post-commitment recruiting, undermining another club, team or coach), eligibility and/or registration violations, or failure to fulfill the terms of a previous sanction.

C. Category III Violations

Incidents involving serious misconduct, which may, or may not, require immediate action, before and without hearing. Examples include, but are not limited to, possession and/or use of alcohol by a junior member, intentional damage to property (including facilities, equipment and/or vehicles), or theft of property.

D. Category IV Violations

Incidents involving behavior which jeopardizes the safety of any individual, requiring immediate action, before and without hearing. Examples include, but are not limited to, sexual misconduct or other inappropriate conduct with a junior, violence or threatening behavior, or actions which seriously undermine or threaten a player (including oneself), club, team, coach, official or the Gateway Region.

II. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Individuals, groups of individuals or organizations which commit a violation are subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions, consistent with the USA Volleyball Participant Code of Conduct:

1. Financial penalty - assessment of a specific monetary penalty.
2. Probation - a warning that further violation of the rules may result in suspension.
3. Suspension - removal of eligibility for participation in some or all sanctioned events and activities for a period not to exceed 12 months.
4. Expulsion - removal of eligibility for participation in some or all sanctioned events and activities for a period of more than 12 months.

III. RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT

Any club, team or individual which is a member of the Gateway Region or which is eligible for membership in the Gateway Region may seek a redress of any volleyball-related grievance that directly affects it, him or her, by filing a written complaint as defined in the Grievance Procedure Process. In cases of serious misconduct (Category III) or when the safety of an individual is at risk (Category IV), notification may initially be given verbally to the Commissioner, an Executive Board member, or an authorized representative of the Gateway Region.??? In addition, ~~the Commissioner, any member of the Region Board and any member of the Gateway Region Office staff may submit a complaint on behalf of the Region.~~

IV. FIRST LEVEL OF ADJUDICATION

Upon receipt of a complaint, the ~~Junior Development Coordinator~~ Gateway Region Commissioner, after reviewing the complaint, shall make an initial determination as to the Category of Violation. The ~~Junior Development Coordinator~~ Commissioner shall advise the Executive Board ~~Do we want to do this????~~ of the complaint and shall review the facts and take one or more of the following actions:

1. In the case of a Category I Violation, imposing a sanction appropriate for such violation as provided by applicable Region policies; by way of clarification, applicable Region policies may authorize the Commissioner, the Gateway Region Office, a tournament director or other person to impose a sanction in the case of a Category I Violation.
2. In the case of a Category II, III or IV Violation, ~~imposing any temporary sanction as the Junior Development Coordinator Commissioner may determine is appropriate, such sanction to remain in force until the complaint and such sanction may be considered at a hearing of a Review Panel, which the Commissioner shall schedule as described below.~~ The Junior Development Coordinator may impose a sanction.
3. Taking no action after determining that the complaint is without merit or that the Region is not the proper authority for addressing the complaint.
4. Taking such action as the Junior Development Coordinator Commissioner may determine is appropriate to attempt to resolve the matter informally; and/or impose a sanction.
5. ~~Scheduling a hearing of a Review Panel to consider the complaint, as follows:~~

- ~~— On or before the 15th day after the later of the receipt of a complaint or the conclusion of a failed attempt at informal resolution, if any, the Gateway Region Office shall send written notice of the hearing by **USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service**. The notice will include:~~
- ~~a. A list of the alleged violations to be considered at the hearing.~~
 - ~~b. A description of any temporary sanction imposed.~~
 - ~~c. A statement that the alleged offender has a right to respond in writing, including the required timeframe.~~
 - ~~d. The date, time and location for a hearing before the Review Panel, which will not be sooner than the 10th day following the date of mailing of the notice unless the Commissioner makes a specific determination that an earlier hearing is appropriate under the circumstances.~~
 - ~~e. The names of the individuals who will constitute the Review Panel.~~
 - ~~f. A description of possible sanctions; and~~
 - ~~g. Complete disclosure of the right to appeal (inclusion of a copy of these Gateway Region USAV Due Process guidelines with the notice of the hearing is sufficient for this purpose).~~

~~Notification of the scheduling of a hearing may be done verbally or via electronic media, however the oral, fax or email notice must be promptly followed by a written notice sent by **USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service**.~~

~~In the case of a Category I Violation for which the Commissioner, the Gateway Region Office, a tournament director or other person has imposed a sanction authorized by applicable Region policies, the offender may appeal the sanction to the Commissioner by filing a written request for appeal, reciting the reasons for the appeal, with the Gateway Region Office on or before the 15th day following the date of the violation. If the offender fails to file a timely and proper request for appeal, then the offender shall have forfeited his or her right to appeal. If the offender files a timely and proper request for appeal, the Commissioner shall consider the appeal promptly and the Commissioner's decision shall be final. There shall be no further appeals with respect to a Category I Violation.~~

Initial Review Panel Hearing Process

~~The hearing will be structured so that the Review Panel has an opportunity to be presented with all sides of the controversy. The Review Panel has full authority to conduct the hearing as it may determine in its discretion and has full authority over decisions concerning procedural matters; the Review Panel is not required to apply any formal rules of evidence to the hearing. The hearing may include testimony by those directly involved, whether in person or in writing. The hearing may be conducted in person or via electronic media. The hearing may be open or closed to other parties. An official recorder of minutes will be provided by the Gateway Region.~~

1. Review Panel

- ~~— The Review Panel will be comprised of three Executive Board members selected by the **Junior Development Coordinator** Commissioner (one member will be identified as Chair).~~

2. Rights of the Alleged Offender

~~The alleged offender will be afforded the opportunity, prior to and/or during the hearing, to review any written complaints or other materials provided to the Review Panel at or prior to the hearing. The alleged offender will also be given the opportunity to respond to his or her accuser(s) through direct inquiry. In specific instances, however, the right to a hostile cross examination may be determined to be inappropriate (i.e., sexual abuse of a minor). In such cases, confrontation shall mean the right of the Chair of the Review Panel to ask questions of a witness on behalf of the alleged offender. This review and confrontation may be conducted in person or via electronic media.~~

3. Determination of Outcome

~~The Review Panel will make its decision based upon a preponderance of the evidence, i.e., whether it is more likely than not (51%) that a violation occurred, and the decision of a majority of the individuals serving on the Review Panel shall constitute the decision of the Review Panel. The Review Panel will make its decision promptly following the conclusion of the hearing, but no later than 60 days following the conclusion of the hearing unless the Commissioner determines to extend such time period. The Gateway Region Office shall notify the alleged offender of the outcome of the Review Panel hearing, in writing, by USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service, promptly following the Review Panel reaching a decision. Where disciplinary action is imposed, the notice of sanction shall include:~~

- ~~1. A summary of the violations.~~
- ~~2. The facts found by a preponderance of the evidence supporting the decision.~~
- ~~3. A description of the sanction(s) imposed, including the term(s) of effect.~~
- ~~4. A statement of the authority for the sanction(s); and~~
- ~~5. Complete disclosure of the right to appeal (inclusion of a copy of these Gateway Region USAV Due Process guidelines with the notice of the hearing is sufficient for this purpose).~~

Initial notification to the offender may be given verbally or via electronic media, however the oral, fax or email notice must be promptly followed by a written notice sent by USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service. The Review Panel's findings and decision must also be filed with the Gateway Region Office.

~~The sanction(s) imposed, the Review Panel's finding and decision, and/or any of the testimony, materials or other information presented at the hearing or made available to the Review Panel or the offender may be made publicly available at the discretion of the Commissioner.?????~~

Any sanction imposed by the Review Panel shall take effect immediately upon the issuance of the Review Panel's decision and shall remain in effect during the pendency of any appeal unless the [Junior Development Coordinator](#) Commissioner determines otherwise at his or her discretion.

V. APPEAL PROCESS

An individual receiving a sanction ~~from a Review Panel~~ may appeal the sanction by notifying the ~~Junior Development Coordinator~~ Commissioner, or his or her designate, in writing of his or her request for an Appeal Hearing, which request must recite the reasons for the appeal, on or before the 15th day following the date of the offender's receipt of the notice of outcome of the Review Panel hearing. The appeal request must be sent by **USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service**. Failure to file the request in the prescribed manner will result in forfeiture of the right to appeal. Upon receipt of a timely and proper appeal request, the Gateway Region Office will schedule an Appeal Hearing ~~in the same manner as the Review Panel hearing~~.

Appeal Hearing

The Appeal Hearing is not required to be a *de novo* proceeding. The Appeal Panel will restrict its review to the reasons for the appeal and may call such witnesses as it deems necessary to make a ruling. The Appeal Panel has full authority to conduct the hearing as it may determine in its discretion and has full authority over decisions concerning procedural matters; the Appeal Panel is not required to apply any formal rules of evidence to the hearing. The Appeal Panel has full authority to amend (eliminate, add, reduce or increase) any sanctions imposed by the Review Panel as the Appeal Panel may determine in its discretion. The hearing may be conducted in person or via electronic media. The hearing may be open or closed to other parties. An official recorder of minutes will be provided by the Gateway Region.

1. Notification of Hearing

On or before the **15th** day after the receipt of a timely and proper appeal request, the Gateway Region Office shall send written notice of the hearing by **USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service**. The notice shall include:

1. A list of the violations/sanctions being appealed.
2. The date, time and location for hearing before an Appeal Panel, which shall not be sooner than the 10th day following the date of mailing of the notice unless the Commissioner makes a specific determination that an earlier hearing is appropriate under the circumstances.
3. The names of the individuals who will constitute the Appeal Panel; and
4. A statement that the decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final and not subject to further review, except as an Exceptional Appeal (section VI below).

2. Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel shall be comprised of three ~~Executive Board~~ **At-Large Board** members ~~selected by the Commissioner~~ (one member will be identified as Chair) and shall not include any member who served on the Review Panel.

3. Rights of the Appellant

The appellant will be afforded the opportunity to address the Appeal Panel and, prior to and/or during the hearing, to review any written documentation that will be provided to the Appeal Panel at or prior to the hearing.

4. Notice of the Outcome

Gateway Region Junior Handbook

The Appeal Panel will make its decision based upon a preponderance of the evidence, i.e., whether it is more likely than not (51%) that a violation occurred, and the decision of a majority of the individuals serving on the Appeal Panel shall constitute the decision of the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will make its decision promptly following the conclusion of the hearing, but no later than 60 days following the conclusion of the hearing unless the Commissioner determines to extend such time period. ~~The Gateway Region Office shall notify the~~ appellant shall be notified of the outcome of the Appeal Panel hearing, in writing, by USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service, promptly following the Appeal Panel reaching a decision. The notice of outcome shall include:

1. A summary of the violations.
2. The facts found by a preponderance of the evidence supporting the decision.
3. A description the sanction(s) imposed/upheld, as amended, including the term(s) of effect.
4. A statement of the authority for the sanction(s); and
5. A statement that the decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final and not subject to further review, except as an Exceptional Appeal (section VI below).

Initial notification to the appellant may be given verbally or via electronic media, however the oral, fax or email notice must be promptly followed by a written notice sent by USPS certified mail or by a nationally recognized overnight delivery service. The Appeal Panel's findings and decision must also be filed with the Gateway Region Office.

The sanction(s) imposed, the Appeal Panel's finding and decision, and/or any of the testimony, materials or other information presented at the hearing or made available to the Appeal Panel or the appellant may be made publicly available at the discretion of the Commissioner. ???

IV. EXCEPTIONAL APPEAL

Teams or individuals registered with a ~~USVBA~~ Regional Volleyball Association, who have been disciplined by such Regional Volleyball Association, may appeal in writing to the USA Volleyball National Ethics and Eligibility Committee, but such appeal shall be limited only to determining whether the appealing party received due process. Information regarding USA Volleyball Corporate Ethics and Eligibility appeal processes can be found in Article XI of the Official USA Volleyball Operating Code or By-laws.

