



Athlete and Parent Handbook

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Introduction

Premier Volleyball was formed by Melissa Andersen. Andersen comes from the Washington D.C. area where she played at Marymount University for 4 years and started as a Freshman and named All-Decade team. After graduating Andersen continued her volleyball career by coaching for Arlington Elite where she coached for 4 years. Andersen was also the head coach of the West Potomac High School's first boys varsity Volleyball Program. Andersen continues to pursue excellence and training in the area of coaching and loves investing in the lives of the athletes she comes into contact with. Andersen has been involved with the U Mary Volleyball program, Capital Volleyball Club, and Bismarck High School's Volleyball Team. Andersen quiet simples, loves volleyball. Now our goal is to grow the game and create as many opportunities as possible for young women to develop a passion for this sport we love.

Here at Premier we do not measure success by wins and losses. Instead, we believe that the success of our club should be measured by our athletes and the quality of their experiences during team practice and competition each season. Our goal is to instill a strong work ethic, confidence, perseverance, integrity, and a winning attitude into all our athletes. Our program is designed to position our athletes to achieve their goals, whether it's competing at the next club level, a middle school team, a high school varsity or college level team. Ultimately, our goal is to help your daughters develop into confident, capable young women. Volleyball is a lifelong sport, and our hope is that our athletes will develop a passion for the game that will allow them to continue learning, playing and teaching volleyball for the rest of their lives.

We've developed this parent and athlete handbook to educate our club families about the mission, core values, goals and policies of our club, and to clearly define coach, player and parent responsibilities during the season. We hope this handbook will address any questions you have about our club and will serve as a useful guide for getting the most out of your club volleyball experience.

Club Leadership & Staff

Premier has assembled a team of the best coaches to support our club families. As stated earlier, Premier is about the growth of the sport, that includes coaches. We encourage collegiate athletes to continue their career coaching with Premier.

Club Philosophy - A Winning Attitude

Individual athlete development, focusing on both physical skills and mental attitude, is at the center of the Premier Volleyball training program. Every interaction with our athletes is guided by the belief that **attitude** is the most important quality in an athlete's success, on and off the court. While winning is not the ultimate goal of our athlete development program, we ask athletes to maintain a winning attitude, which means staying positive and respectful with teammates and coaches and putting forth maximum effort at both practices and tournaments, regardless of the scoreboard.

Part I: Playing for a Premier Team

Premier Volleyball is committed to helping our student athletes reach their full potential on and off the volleyball court. We challenge our athletes to practice and compete at the highest level and hold them to a high standard that includes a competitive attitude, hard work and team spirit. Our goal is to develop the “whole athlete” and create opportunities for all our athletes to improve their skills, develop lasting friendships, continue their volleyball careers, and grow into confident, capable young women. Below you’ll find a summary of our core values, which will be reiterated throughout this handbook.

Player Development: Individual player development, both on and off the court, is the key to the success of any club or team. Our training program is focused on helping individual athletes reach their full potential.

Coaching Excellence: Coaches are a significant influence on the lives of our athletes. We hold our coaches to a high standard both on and off the court and offer a comprehensive coach development program so that every Premier athlete receives the highest level of quality coaching.

Effort: Each time our athlete’s step on the court, they have an opportunity to better themselves. We expect maximum effort in both practice and competition. As a club, we put forth tremendous effort to ensure a positive, enriching experience for your child.

Competition: Challenging athletes against tough competition is more important than a short-term win. We put our teams and athletes in highly competitive situations and ask them to raise both their physical and mental game in order to reach their full potential.

Attitude: We believe that the attitude of our athletes, parents and coaches determines the success of our club. We expect a winning attitude of respect, effort, discipline and teamwork from athletes, parents, and coaches.

Communication: Communication - among coaches, athletes, parents and staff - is essential to a successful program. We believe that teaching our daughters how to communicate with coaches and teammates is an important part of the growth process offered by club volleyball. We encourage thoughtful, constructive communication between all parties.

Tryouts

Premier Volleyball holds tryouts each year to select athletes for our teams. Tryouts are held at the end of November or beginning of December depending on gym availability.

Selection Process

Selection for a Premier team will be based upon the following criteria:

- • Player performance during tryouts, including skill level, effort, competitiveness and interaction with other athletes
- • Athletic potential, and how a player may develop over the course of a season
- • Attitude and coachability of the player
- • Evaluations of the player from past club seasons, camps or high school performance
- • Past history of parental involvement or behavior
- • Being in good standing with Premier and USA Volleyball

Verbal Offers and Commitments

Premier Coaches may make a verbal offer to the parents of a player prior to the official tryout date. While these offers are not technically binding under Premier rules, Premier coaches make offers of this nature with the highest level of integrity, and we expect the same from our player families who make verbal commitments to our club.

During the tryout process, Premier coaches will verbally contact parents of athletes being offered a position within the club. We will keep in mind, that if a tryout goes late, we will make calls the next morning. Parents will be asked to verbally commit to the team. This will be followed by posting tryout numbers on our website. A parent must reply to premiervball@gmail.com and accept the offer via email. Once a parent has replied and committed to our club, the commitment is binding for the season. We would like to remind parents that if they plan to decline our offer to please do so as quickly as possible so we can offer the opportunity to another player.

Waiting List

After the first round of offers is made, all remaining athletes are placed on a waiting list. Please know that in past seasons, the majority of athletes on our waiting list receive offers. Depending on the size of the waiting list, we may create an additional team to accommodate strong interest in a particular age group. If the waiting list is not large enough to field another team, we encourage these athletes to be a part of our academy team to continue their growth in the sport. We will do our best to keep everyone in the age group informed of their status and will send an email once all the team positions are filled.

Time Commitment

Premier Volleyball encourages our athletes to be involved in school activities and understands the value of participation in high school sports. We will do our best to accommodate the reasonable demands of other sports and school activities. Academics should always be the priority of our athletes. Athletes who have conflicts with other sports should consider accepting the practice player position that is offered for each team. Before trying out, athletes and parents should discuss whether the athlete can make the necessary time commitment to the club and her team.

Teams

Local & Travel Teams

Team Philosophy

All Premier teams are trained as a “1s” team. We select the top athletes in each age group, and combine them to form the strongest teams possible, depending on player position, skill level and team chemistry. All our teams practice and train at the same level and attend the same tournaments or equivalent tournaments (when possible). We do not view any team as a “2s” team and expect our athletes and parents to adhere to this philosophy in all interactions with athletes, coaches, parents and those outside the club.

Local Teams

Athletes who join a **Local** typically play 4-5 one day tournaments each season. Athletes who make a local team will travel within the state to various tournaments with the possibility of one out of state tournament depending on tournament acceptance and scheduling conflicts. By committing to any Local team, athlete families are making a financial commitment to attend tournaments at their own expense.

Travel Teams

All members of a **Travel Team** play in 4-5 tournaments each season. This includes local one day and one or two, two-day out of state tournament per season. By committing to any Travel team, athlete families are making a financial commitment to attend tournaments at their own expense. To ensure that athletes on travel teams are challenged at the highest level, teams sometimes may compete in a higher age group. Athletes on Travel teams typically practice two days a week. All members of our travel teams will be held to the same standard of commitment and behavior to their coaches and teammates.

Local Tournaments

A local tournament is defined as a tournament within state. Local tournaments do not require a hotel stay, although some families may choose to stay in a nearby hotel the night before a competition. No travel arrangements will be made by Premier staff for local tournaments but could be arranged by the Team Parent.

Number of Athletes

Teams typically consist of 9 full-time registered athletes with the opportunity to host 3 practice players.

Practice Player

The Premier Practice Player position is a unique opportunity for an athlete to continue to grow their skills on a team. This position was created for those athletes able to compete as a full-time registered player but cannot make the commitment due to other sport conflicts. This athlete could be asked to attend a tournament if the team is short due to illness or injury. If this athlete is invited to attend and can make the tournament, there will be a prorated fee for attending the tournament.

Team Names

All Premier Girls teams are named after Premier colors, whether it's a Local team or a Travel team. Each age group has its own orange theme, and no two teams have the same color. That's because at Premier, we don't call our teams "1s" and "2s." Every orange team is capable of a winning season, and every Premier player receives the same level of training whether she is on a Local team or a Travel team. We are proud of our ORANGE TEAM NAMES and so are our athletes.

Team Practices

Schedule

Premier Volleyball teams practice 2 days a week, depending on the age of the team and whether it is an academy, Local, or Travel team. Team practices are usually an hour and a half or 2 hours in length, and may consist of group skills practices with other teams, team-specific practice or a joint-practice and scrimmage with another Premier team. We will do our best to maintain a consistent practice schedule at the same location throughout the season. However, Premier coaches may sometimes have to adjust the practice schedule due to weather conditions or scheduling conflicts beyond our control at the practice facilities. Please note that shared practice courts are a regular part of the

Premier practice schedule. Sharing courts with another team is an opportunity for athletes to be exposed to different coaches and to scrimmage with new teammates.

Practice Requirements

The following rules apply to ALL practices

- ● Athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices during the season.
- ● Athletes are expected to be on time to all practices. This means athletes should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to practice time to give athletes time to say hello to teammates, change into court shoes etc. so they can start practice on time. A player who knows she will be late to practice or needs to leave early must inform her coach prior to practice. Coaches spend time putting together practice plans expecting all athletes to be there, we understand things happen but early communication will help coaches better prepare and have a more efficient and effective practice.
- ● Athletes are expected to help set up, take down, and count balls before leaving the practice area. This should not fall on the same athletes every time. If a coach notices the same athletes setting up and taking down, assign set up and take down responsibilities could be added.
- ● Athletes are expected to work hard and be attentive and respectful to their coach and teammates during practice. Athletes who do not appear engaged, who are talking or disruptive or who are putting forth little effort will be asked to leave the practice.
- ● Athletes should wear proper attire (shirt, spandex, knee pads, socks and court shoes) with hair tied back. No jewelry is allowed to be worn during practice or tournaments. We expect athletes to maintain a neat and appropriate appearance, and athletes who wear inappropriate attire to practice will be asked to change or to leave practice.
- ● Athletes are expected to bring adequate water to practice and have the water available at courtside for breaks. Athletes should need to leave the practice area.
- ● Player items and backpacks should be placed neatly at the side of the court. All player items and gear should be placed inside the backpack and not left on top of or next to the backpack.
- ● Cell phone use is strictly prohibited during practice. At the start of practice, all cell phones must be left inside the backpack and cannot be used or checked until practice is over and the player has left the practice court. Violations of this policy may result in a player being benched during practice. Repeated violations of this policy may result in loss of playing time during a tournament.
- ● Athletes should not talk with parents or visitors during practice time.
- ● Violations of the Premier practice policies may result in suspension from practices and/or tournaments.

Missed Practices

Athletes who consistently miss practice or are late to practice should expect to lose playing time during tournaments. The following rules apply:

- ● If a player will be late to practice or must miss a practice, a telephone call or text (not email) to their head coach is expected at least 4 hours before practice. Advanced notice is expected if the missed practice or late arrival is due to vacation, school function or another event scheduled in advance.
- ● If a traffic delay occurs that will cause a player to be late to practice, please text your coach to inform him or her of the delay.
- ● While we recognize that academics take priority over athletics, we ask athletes to exercise time management so they can complete homework, studying and projects in a timely manner so they are able to attend scheduled practices. If a player knows an academic conflict will interfere with practice, she must discuss the conflict with her coach in advance of missing practice.
- ● Injured athletes who can attend school are expected to attend practice to support their team and be available to help where they can, even if they cannot physically participate in practice. Athletes with long-term injuries should discuss practice participation with their coach.
- ● Athletes who are ill should NOT come to practice.
- ● Athletes who must miss practice due to poor weather conditions should alert their coach as soon as possible. While we ask athletes to make every effort to attend practice, a player who is absent due to severe weather will not be penalized for the missed practice.

Cancelled Practices

The safety of our Premier athletes and families come first. With living in North Dakota we are no strangers to crazy weather. Because of this some practices may be cancelled due to weather conditions or facility scheduling conflicts. While Premier will do its best to makeup a cancelled practice, this may not always be possible. Cancelled practices, especially due to weather, are an inevitable part of the season and no refunds will be given.

Parent Attendance at Practice

- ● Practices are open, however we discourage parents from regularly attending full practices. While we know parents enjoy watching their children play, we believe that athletes will learn and improve faster when they are focused on their coach and teammates without the regular distraction of a parent nearby.
- ● Parents who attend practices must sit in designated areas on the edge of the court. Parents may not cheer, coach or offer instruction to their daughter or another team member at any time during practice.
- ● Parents should not have conversations with athletes during practice. Parents are not permitted on the court, unless requested by the coaching staff. Parents who violate a practice rule will be asked to leave the practice area.

TOURNAMENTS

Premier girls teams typically will compete in 4-5 tournaments during a season, which begins in January and ends beginning/mid May. Bid-winning teams attending post-season tournaments will continue to practice and compete through June or early July, depending on the schedule of the tournament. Tentative team schedules will be posted on the Premier website during tryouts, but these schedules are subject to change depending on tournament availability and acceptance, and other scheduling issues. Athletes who accept a position on a Premier team are making a commitment to attend all tournaments, including those that are not outlined on the preliminary schedule. Final tournament schedules will be posted once tournament registration is complete near the end of December.

Post-Season Tournaments: If a team wins a USAV bid through a national qualifier all athletes on that team are committed to attending the USAV Girls Jr National Championship tournament (GJNC). Parents of athletes on bid-winning teams agree to pay an additional tuition payment not to exceed \$550 within a month of winning the bid, as well as all player and parent travel costs associated with attending the GJNC tournament.

Cancelled Tournaments: While we do our best to adhere to the planned tournament schedule, unforeseen events may lead to a tournament cancellation, or a team not being accepted to play. Reasons for a cancelled tournament include but are not limited to tournament availability, decisions by tournament organizers, weather conditions, facility issues, player injuries or player scheduling conflicts and other unforeseen events. In the event a tournament is cancelled for any reason, Premier will attempt to replace the tournament with a similar event. However, it is not always possible to find an alternative tournament, and no refunds will be given for a cancelled tournament. Premier will not send teams to travel tournaments with fewer than 8 athletes and reserves the option to cancel a tournament if a team cannot field a full roster of at least 9 athletes. Premier is not responsible for player costs, airline fees or hotel costs related to cancelled tournaments.

Tournament Policies

Premier teams attend all tournaments to compete. Everything else is secondary. While we know many player families travel with their athletes and schedule vacation time around the tournament schedule, we ask that parents support their player's goal to compete at the highest level. This means that sightseeing, socializing and visiting family members should be saved for the end of a tournament and should not interfere with a player's focus during the tournament. The following rules apply to help athletes maintain maximum focus during team competition.

PREPAREDNESS

- • Athletes should arrive on time to all tournaments and scheduled warmups and matches. It is club policy that athletes who are late to a tournament, warm ups or match will not start in the first set and may lose playing time.
- • Athletes commit to getting enough sleep prior to the tournament and to maintaining proper nutrition before and during the tournament.
- • Athletes commit to maintaining the condition of their uniform and having all uniforms quickly available at all times during a tournament. Athletes who do not have the proper uniform at the court at all times will not play.
- • Athletes should wear their Premier gear when entering the tournament venue.
- • Athletes should line up backpacks neatly in the camping area.
- • Backpacks should be brought to the playing court and lined up neatly and easily accessible while playing a match. Warm ups must be placed inside the zipped backpack. Athletes should not toss clothing to the side of the playing area or on top of their backpack.
- • Water bottles should be filled before a team begins warmups. Athletes are required to maintain their own water bottles. Parents are not allowed to enter the court or team huddle to provide a player with water. For our 14 and under teams, parents can assign a team parent to fill water bottles before each match.
- • Athletes should be dressed and ready to warm up prior to the start time of their warm up period.
- • Athletes should not wear any jewelry during the tournament, and wear secure headbands and hair ties that are not at risk of falling off during play.

ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

- • Athletes are representing the club, their teammates, themselves, and families at a tournament and promise to always behave in a respectful manner to tournament officials, coaches, teammates, parents and their opponents.
- • Athletes should refrain from negative behavior on the court. Every match includes mistakes and disappointments. It's important that athletes learn how to manage their emotions and stay positive for themselves and their teammates.
- • Cell phones are to be put away during warmups, competition and work duties. Athletes who violate this policy will sit out the next set. No exceptions.
- • Camp areas are to be kept neat and all trash thrown away immediately after use, not left until the end of the tournament.
- • Athletes and parents should never argue with officials. This includes player line judges and scorekeepers. Disputes over scores should be handled by athletes and coaches only, and parents should not shout or intervene in any way.
- • Athletes who want to speak with their coach about playing time or position during a tournament should be respectful of their coach's time and ask to have these discussions at appropriate times during the tournament. (Additional guidance can be found in the *Conflict Resolution* section of this handbook)

- • Athletes will be penalized with loss of playing time if their parents approach a coach about issues of playing time, position or other disputes during a tournament. (Please see the *Conflict Resolution* section of this handbook.)
- • Athletes will be penalized with loss of playing time if their parents interfere in any way with tournament play. This includes interrupting warmups, huddles or coaching from the sidelines by parents.

TEAM TOGETHERNESS

- • Athletes will stay with their team at all times during a tournament. This means athletes will dine together and spend time together in between matches whenever possible.
- • Athletes are suggested to stay in team hotels set up by Premier leadership or Team parent. (See tournament policies)
- • Athletes should do their best to stay focused on the task at hand. Spend your downtime with your teammates and maintain your focus. Please save socializing for after play has ended for the day.
- • All athletes are required to help with the line judging, scorekeeping, score flipping, and down officiating. No headsets or cell phones are to be used during officiating assignments. This also means absolutely no cell phones at the scorekeeper's table. Athletes who consistently resist working or argue about performing a particular work duty will lose playing time.
- • Athletes should always show respect for each other on and off the court. Poor sportsmanship, finger-pointing and bullying tactics will not be tolerated.
- • Team Events are essential to success. Attendance at team lunches, dinners and outings are encouraged. Team parents should consult with the group to plan a reasonable number of affordable team activities at a tournament, and athletes are required to attend once a team activity has been arranged and agreed upon by a majority of the group. Athletes who skip team events risk playing time penalties.
- • Athletes, whenever possible, should spend their downtime supporting other Premier teammates competing in the venue.

PLAYING TIME

When a parent and player make a commitment to club volleyball, they are investing in the benefits and challenges of playing a team sport and all that goes with it. At Premier, our commitment to parents and athletes is that we will focus on the whole athlete, helping her develop her volleyball skills by providing quality coaching, intensive practice and player development opportunities and tournament competition. In the course of the club season, athletes also learn how to cope with adversity and pressure, develop poise and mental toughness and how to balance the competing demands of school, sports, college goals and friendships. When all is said and done, playing time during tournaments amounts to a mere fraction of the time an athlete spends during her commitment to club volleyball. USA Volleyball's John Kessel found that during 8

matches of Olympic competition, the average player spent less than 28 seconds touching the ball. Most ball touches, learning and playing time during the club volleyball season occurs during practice.

That said, tournament playing time and team position remain the greatest sources of parent-coach conflict in club volleyball. We want to outline our playing time policy here so that every parent is aware of our policies.

Playing Time During Pool Play

Our goal at the beginning of the season is to give every player a chance to prove herself by allowing all athletes to compete during pool play and play different positions when possible. Depending on the level of competition, the player's position and relative skill level, this may mean playing every set or only a portion of every other set during pool play. We advise our coaches to be more equitable about playing time when dealing with 14U and younger teams and local teams. Athletes on Travel teams and high school-age teams are accustomed to a higher level of competition and specialization and should recognize that playing time will not be evenly distributed across athletes. Please note that at no time is a player guaranteed a minimum amount of playing time.

Playing Time During Playoffs

Once a team has advanced to playoffs, the coach will play the strongest lineup, trying whenever possible to give playing time to everyone. Coaches decide how much playing time an individual player will receive based on performance at practice and tournaments and the relative level of competition in the remaining matches.

Mid-Season Lineups

By mid-season, coaches have a pretty clear idea of their strongest lineup. As teams prepare for competitions, coaches and athletes will be stepping up the intensity and effort at practice time. This is also the time in the season when coaches make tough decisions about lineups. As our teams work to compete at a high level, our coaches will play their strongest lineups in order to elicit the best possible performance from their teams. This may mean that some athletes play a little more than others, depending on position. While we ask our coaches to find ways to include every player in the competition. (For instance, a backup setter may play very little if the coach decides to run a 5-1 rather than a 6-2. A defensive specialist may play very little if the coach is running a 6-2 and playing both outsides in the back row. Many variables go into lineups and playing time, and often good athletes sit on the bench when a coach makes tactical adjustments to the lineup based on the challenges facing the team that day.)

Athletes on the Bench

When a player is on the bench, he or she is still participating in the match. Time on the bench is essential for both physical rest and to help a player recharge her emotional

batteries to stay engaged in competition. Downtime during a match is an opportunity for athletes to study their opponent and practice ball-reading skills. A bench player may be called on at any time during a match, and it's important that she has maintained the mental alertness to study the opponent and maintain poise and confidence to jump onto the court and play her best. There were many times during past seasons when athletes were called from the bench at pivotal moments and rose to the occasion. It is for this reason that athletes and parents must maintain a positive attitude whether they are on the court or on the bench. A player on the bench should show sportsmanship, team spirit and court awareness at all times.

Athletes Getting “Pulled”

A coach may make a decision to “pull” a player from her starting spot. Sometimes this occurs to give athletes rest or to create an opportunity for another player to have playing time. Sometimes the player is pulled for a poor performance or attitude. In all of these cases, we expect the benched player to maintain a winning attitude. Athletes should leave the court quickly with head held high and offer encouragement to the replacement player. They should use their bench time wisely, to rest or regain composure if they performed poorly. Premier coaches may penalize athletes who demonstrate a negative attitude or poor sportsmanship when taken off the court.

Playing Time During College Recruiting

Athletes should inform the coach when a college recruiter may be visiting the court during a tournament. While the presence of a college recruiter will not influence a coach's overall playing time decisions, a coach can reach out to a recruiter on behalf of a player. College recruiters understand that a player may not be on the court while they are present. Athletes should be aware that college recruiters often watch athletes during warmups. In addition, your coach can talk to the recruiter about the player's abilities, invite the recruiter to attend a practice or the player can make arrangements to attend a college practice or camp. Playing time at one tournament does not make or break a recruit's chances and parents and athletes still need to comply with the conflict resolution policy if they do not agree with the coach's decisions.

Parents and Playing Time

The support of parents is essential to an individual player and the success of her or his team. We ask our parents to maintain a positive attitude and encourage their player to stay confident and positive, whether she/he is a starting player who receives significant playing time or a substitute player who plays fewer rotations. Coaches and the club leadership are the ultimate authority about team lineups and playing time decisions. Under no circumstances is a parent to discuss lineups or playing time with coaches whether at a tournament, at practice or by email or text. A parent who wants to discuss decisions should follow the steps outlined in the conflict resolution policy.

Violations of the Conflict Resolution Policy

A parent who tries to talk to a coach or club official about an issue of playing time or position will be reminded to follow the conflict resolution policy. A second infraction will result in lost practice and/or tournament playing time for the player. **A parent who approaches a coach about an issue of playing time, position or *any grievance* during a tournament will be asked to leave the tournament and will be suspended for the next tournament.** The player will be benched for at least the next set or more, at the coach's discretion. Approaching a coach at a tournament to air a complaint is a serious violation of club policy. A second violation will result in a more severe penalty, including possible player expulsion from the club.

Constructive Communication

We recognize that sometimes a parent may feel angry or frustrated and be tempted to vent his or her feelings. We also know that at times a parent may have a legitimate concern that needs to be aired. We ask both our coaches and our parents to maintain perspective and self control at all times, complying with our 24-hour rule and our conflict resolution policy (see below.) **Abusive behavior toward anyone is a serious violation of club policy.** A parent who yells at or makes threatening remarks to a coach, player, parent, official or staff member will be banned from all future practices and the player may be benched, suspended or terminated from the club.

Part II: Our Commitment to Our Athletes

Academy Team

Player development is a core value of Premier Volleyball. Our unique academy program is aimed at helping every player set and achieve her goals during the season and reach her full potential on and off the court. Our master coaches, team coaches, specialty coaches and leadership all will work with athletes to ensure a positive club experience. Members of our recruiting and player development staff will help athletes focus on individual goals and offer club-wide programming that focuses on both skill training and character development.

Skill Development

Individual skills training is essential to player and team success. We may host Premier training days that will include athletes from all teams to work on various skills at the same clinic/practice. The focus on technique and consistency will result in a more successful season overall. Athletes also have the option of seeking individual lessons outside of practice time. Information about additional clinics and private and group lessons can be found on our website.

Team and Club Spirit

Fun and friendship are essential ingredients to club volleyball. We encourage our team parents to organize team events at home and during travel. As a club we also want to foster a sense of club spirit and unity among our athletes. Throughout the year, we will offer club-wide events such as a winter holiday party, dress-up days, and year-end celebration. We encourage our player families to participate in these events so that athletes can get the most out of the club experience.

Coach and Player Development Program

Coaching Excellence is a core value of Premier Volleyball. Coaches are a significant influence on the lives of our athletes, and we hold them to a high standard both on and off the court. To support our coaching staff, we offer a comprehensive coach development program and numerous coaching resources so that every Premier player receives the highest level of quality coaching.

Every Premier coach has access to Gold Metal Squared program that is equipped with how to teach a specific skill to drills to using the lineup for their team. This program has collegiate coaches from D1 to NAIA giving feedback on developing athletes.

Shared practices with other teams are encouraged as a part of our training program, allowing both athletes and coaches to work with other members of Premier and develop consistent skill-based training. Sharing court time with other teams and coaches is an advantage to playing and training with Premier.

We value complete development of our players. All players need to know all skills regardless of their position. A player cannot be successful at the next level if they cannot perform all skills. A middle hitter who cannot pass or a libero who cannot set is not a player who will have opportunities later in their career. Training that limits certain skills to certain positions is more about creating a winning line up and less about the development of the whole player.

We value practice for learning. Practice is where players do the majority of their learning, especially early in their playing careers. Players get more touches and work on their whole game in practice. Players get limited touches and use limited skills at tournaments. For this reason we also believe strength and conditioning should happen outside of scheduled practice times.

We value the process over the outcome. We encourage coaches, players and families to focus on the development, effort, and execution of our athletes, -- not their win/loss record. We will lose sets and play well, we will win sets and play poorly. Our goals are to focus on playing well and playing with great effort, energy and purpose.

We value teaching from a positive perspective. We want to motivate primarily through purpose, not fear or incentive. We understand all types of motivation can and should be applied at appropriate times, but helping athletes develop their sense of purpose in a positive environment is a better long-term teaching strategy.

We value relationships with our Premier families. Our objective each season is to develop our players to the best of our abilities. We believe that the Premier Way is the best way to prepare this year's players for next year's season's challenges. Our prior relationship with players does influence our decisions -- our coaches share perspectives on player improvement, attitude, and teamwork. However, our first responsibility is to our club members and establishing competitive teams to compete in the North Country Region and beyond.

We value research-based instruction. The Premier Way is derived from a variety of proven coaching principles and some of the top coaches in the NCAA and FIVB.

- **The Laws of Motor Learning**
- **Growth Mindset principles**, Trevor Ragan (<http://trainugly.com/growth-mindset-hub/>)

- Mindset, Carol S. Dweck (<http://mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/>)
- USA Volleyball (<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Volleyball>)
- Gold Medal Squared (www.goldmedalsquared.com)

We value R.E.F.F. in our practice plans:

- **Reps** - incorporate as many random, game like reps as possible to develop the premier skill for volleyball -- **READING**.
- **Engagement** - create a fun and purposeful environment to encourage full participation in all practice activities.
- **Focus** - have a specific purpose for each session and skill.
- **Feedback** - showing is better than telling so we demo skills and incorporate ipad video. We also guide players to the answers through asking questions and promoting self-awareness.

Communication

Communication is a core value of Premier Volleyball. We believe strong communication is the cornerstone of a strong program, and that problems and misunderstandings are avoided when the club and coaches communicate with parents and athletes. We provide several opportunities for player families to stay informed about everything that is happening at Premier Volleyball.

Emails

Email is our main form of club communication so please check your email regularly for important updates. If you do not see emails from our club, please check and make sure we have your correct address. When filling out our forms PLEASE use care to input your correct email address. Careless typos mean we will not have your correct contact information.

Website

Premiervb.org is your also a great resource for keeping up with everything happening in our club. Our website is used to celebrate your child's accomplishments and to keep everyone updated on news and information related to tournament schedules and practices. You will also find key club policies, club contact information, coach information and team schedules, and rosters.

Facebook

Please like us on Facebook (Premier Volleyball) for the latest updates, tournament finishes and photo fun.

Cell Phones, Text Messaging & Team Snap

We understand that athletes often communicate best by text messaging. Our coaches may use text messages to communicate with athletes about practice changes and tournament times. We will be using Sports Engine for team communication, change in practice time or location, or tournament info.

Parent Communications

We encourage parents to email **premiervball@gmail.com** with questions about club business. You are also welcome to contact coaches by email or text message about issues of logistics or scheduling. However, please refer to our Conflict Resolution Policy in this manual for guidance on how to communicate about issues related to your child's performance or playing time.

Part III: Policies & Procedures

UNIFORM POLICY

Athletes are responsible for having uniforms with them at all times, for maintaining their uniform in top condition and for keeping track of their uniform and equipment at all times. The following rules apply.

- Athletes who accept a position at Premier Volleyball also commit to the responsibility of taking care of the jersey issued to them at the beginning of season. **Please note that we will do our best to issue comfortable uniform sizes for each athlete.**
- Athletes are responsible for choosing appropriate sizing of spandex and all uniform items.
- Uniforms will not be distributed to athletes with past-due accounts or athletes who have not completed all paperwork and registration requirements.
- If a uniform is torn please email premiervball@gmail.com AS SOON AS POSSIBLE so we can reissue a new jersey.

UNIFORM CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- Athletes must bring all uniforms to every tournament. No exceptions. A player who does not have her complete uniform will not be allowed to play.
- Athletes must keep all uniform items inside their zipped backpack. Athletes should not toss items to the side of the court or place them on top of a backpack.
- Athletes should keep backpacks near the court at all times in case a uniform change is required.
- Uniforms should be washed separately from other items in cold water. Please do not dry uniforms in a heated dryer. Uniforms dry quickly and should be air dried in order to preserve the printed numbers. Uniforms that are not cared for properly could result in a player expensing a new jersey.
- Uniforms are the property of Premier. Please respect this property as you would not like to receive a torn jersey the next season
- Athletes must alert their coach when a playing jersey is lost and make every effort to replace the lost jersey as quickly as possible. Single jersey replacement is expensive and may be \$50 or more depending on the item.

TRAVEL POLICIES

Premier Volleyball manages travel each year for coaches, athletes, and their families. For this reason, it is essential that our parents pay attention to emails about travel and hotel bookings and meet deadlines. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they

have booked hotels and airfare in a timely fashion to attend tournaments. The following rules apply.

- **Attendance & Costs:** Athletes commit to attending all travel tournaments. It is the responsibility of the player family to arrange and pay for all travel (airfare and ground transportation) and hotel accommodations for athletes attending all tournaments including travel tournaments. Premier is not responsible for player costs or change fees related to cancelled travel tournaments. (*See tournament section for policies on cancelled tournaments*)
- **Flight Policy:** Airline reservations should be scheduled to arrive the day before a tournament, with arrival before 8 p.m. to ensure that athletes have enough time to rest and mentally prepare for the tournament. Families are discouraged from booking the last flight of the day as unexpected cancellations may prevent a player from arriving at the tournament on time. Return travel should be scheduled after 7 p.m. on the final day of a tournament. We suggest this time based on years of experience with tournament scheduling and the fact that final playoff games on the final day of competition can start as late as 3 p.m. Athletes who schedule late arrivals prior to a tournament or early departures that require leaving a tournament before a team has finished playing will be penalized at future tournaments.
- **Club Hotel Blocks:** All hotels for all travel tournaments will be booked in hotel blocks by the team parent. (A travel tournament is one designated by Premier as a travel tournament) When committing to a Premier travel team, parents are also committing to comply with our hotel policy. Parents will be asked to secure rooms in the hotel block or via a rooming list using a personal credit card. All hotel costs related to tournaments are paid for by player families and are not included in season tuition.
- **Team Hotels:** Athletes MUST stay in the team hotel during designated travel tournaments. This includes any travel tournament designated as such by Premier, regardless of the tournament's hotel policy. This includes, but is not limited to, all post-season tournaments. If a parent does not want to stay in the team hotel, they should make arrangements for the player to room with another family in the team hotel.
- **Room Availability:** Only one room per family will be reserved by the club or team parent. Families who want extra rooms for grandparents or friends or large families must contact the hotel directly but they may not receive the team rate.
- **Stay-to-Play policies.** Some tournaments have stay-to-play policies which require the club to book a minimum number of rooms in order to participate in the tournament. We do our best to secure hotel locations close to the tournament venue, but this is not always possible when room stock is low. Some tournaments hold lotteries to determine the allocation of rooms. Premier families are required to stay in the team hotel and comply with the hotel policies of our tournaments even if more desirable rooms might be available at another hotel.
- **Post-Season Hotels:** Every player on a team participating in a post-season tournament, including USAV nationals and AAU nationals, is required to stay in

the designated Premier room block. Athletes are not allowed to make their own hotel or lodging arrangements for any post-season tournament. No exceptions.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

We know that club volleyball is a significant investment of time and money for our athlete's family. Our goal as a club is to deliver a quality program that will help young athletes improve both their skills and knowledge of the game, gain confidence and poise on and off the court, achieve their dreams of playing in college and develop lasting friendships. We do our best to minimize costs and to offer reasonable payment options to ease the financial burden for our player families. The majority of the costs of club volleyball stem from practice facility costs, tournament fees, and coaching expenses.

Administrative Commitment

A player family that commits to play for Premier Volleyball is also committing to meeting all administrative requirements in a timely fashion. Any player who does not meet administrative deadlines will be benched from practices and tournaments. These deadlines include (but are not limited to):

- Show your coach a copy of the updated, full-season NCR registration membership. Deadline: First of January
- Providing medical forms, proof-of-age-documents and player contracts by required deadlines. Deadline: First practice

Financial Commitment

A player family that commits to play for Premier Volleyball is making a financial commitment to pay the full tuition in a timely manner. This is a non-refundable season tuition as all tournaments must be paid for weeks in advanced with limited to no refunds available.

Late Payments

Timely payment of tuition is essential to our program, as payments for facilities, tournaments and travel are due early in the season. We ask that parents recognize the importance of payment deadlines. A late fee may be added to your payments. Please communicate with us in a timely fashion if you are having difficulty making a payment.

Injuries

While we do our best to help athletes practice and play safely, injuries are an inevitable part of any sport. We do not issue refunds to injured athletes and expect injured athletes to continue coming to practice until healed. Long-term injuries that remove a player from a team for the majority of the season will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Typically, we will give an injured player credit toward a summer program or next season to recoup the costs of missed club practices.

Part IV: Parent and Player Responsibilities

Role of the Parent

Parents are essential partners in training the club athlete. We know parents make a significant financial and time commitment to allow their children to take part in club volleyball. We also know parents are an important influence on a player's attitude at practice and tournaments. For these reasons we have outlined some helpful reminders to ensure that your player gets the most out of her season.

- *Let the coaches coach.* We respectfully ask that parents leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes advice and comments from the sidelines at practices and tournaments, after-game-critiquing, etc. We ask that you work with our coaches or director to set realistic goals for your child. You have entrusted the care of your player to our coaches, and they need to be free to do their job. If athletes have too many coaches, it is confusing for them, and their performance usually declines.
- *Provide logistical support.* Please continue to provide your child age-appropriate support when it comes to being on time for practices and tournaments, being prepared, having uniforms clean and available, having an adequate supply of water and having all appropriate gear at practices and tournaments. Be sure your child is eating the proper foods and getting adequate rest.
- *Be your child's biggest fan.* Players rely on their coaches for feedback, skill development and coaching. They rely on their parents for moral support. Please continue to support your child unconditionally. Please do not engage in post-match critiques. Instead, volleyball conversations with your athlete should focus on maintaining a positive attitude, being a supportive teammate, setting goals and staying confident in themselves and their training.
- *Do not talk about other athletes.* Parents should never discuss the performance of athletes. Not on the sidelines. Not with other parents and not with their children. Please, never comment in public or private about another child's ability or performance.
- *Support all athletes on the team.* The success of the team creates opportunities for every player. Foster teamwork. Cheer for every player and encourage your child to learn from her teammates.

- *Support the program.* The success of our teams and our clubs is dependent on the support of parents. Please stay positive, attend club events, organize fun team outings and fill out all necessary forms, meet travel reservation deadlines and comply with the Parent Code of Conduct. When parents dispense with club business in a timely fashion, Premier coaches and staff have more time to devote to improving our program for your child.
- *Encourage your child to talk with the coaches.* If your child is having difficulties in practice or games, or can't make a practice, etc., encourage them to speak directly to the coaches. Allowing them to take this responsibility fosters their individual growth and maturity.
- *Learn the Game.* It's important that parents understand the rules of volleyball. Many issues, including coach playing time and lineup decisions, can be resolved by knowledge of the game. Many parents who see their child on the bench don't understand that their daughter has simply rotated off the court and remains a key player in the lineup. A strong player may be subbed out during a substantial lead to give other athletes an opportunity to compete. New parents may not understand strategic lineup decision like a 5-1 or a 6-2 -- and these distinctions are important to understanding your child's experience. Talk to your son or daughter to learn more about volleyball (you will be surprised at how much they know!), ask other experienced team parents if you don't understand something and feel free to ask our coaches and staff members general questions about the sport to improve your volleyball IQ. Use the resources posted on the Premier website to stay up to date on our sport.
- *Display appropriate game behavior.* Be supportive during matches and cheer when appropriate. Refrain from loud cheers or direct statements to your player or other athletes. Do not coach from the sidelines. To perform their best, athletes need to focus on the parts of the game that they can control (awareness, effort, decision making) and should not be distracted by comments from parents. We expect Premier parents to always be respectful to other teams and officials.
- *Help your child keep her/his priorities straight:* Help your child manage stress and maintain a focus on school work, relationships and the other things in life in addition to volleyball.
- *Keep volleyball in its proper perspective:* Competitive sports can produce strong emotions in parents. We feel our child's disappointments so strongly, it can be difficult to keep those feelings under control. Remember your relationship will continue with your children long after their competitive volleyball days are over.
- *Have fun!* Club volleyball is about growing as a player and a person, as well as forming powerful, lasting friendships and amazing memories shared by teammates and family members. Win or lose, volleyball should always be fun!

Conflict Resolution Policy

While our club and team policies are outlined in this document, we know that from time to time, some concerns may arise. Our conflict resolution policy gives parents and coaches a constructive forum for resolving questions and concerns. We offer the following guidelines to resolve areas of concern.

Step 1: Player Communicates to Coach: We encourage our athletes to communicate their concerns to their coach at any time, whether an issue arises at practice or during a tournament. We know it's not always easy for athletes, particularly our younger athletes, to express themselves to a coach. Parents should encourage their daughters to take this step, and we expect our coaches to offer thoughtful responses that will help a player set goals and develop and improve her game. We ask our coaches to have an open door policy when it comes to player communication. While there are no limits on player communication with a coach, we ask athletes to use good judgment about how and when they approach a coach at a tournament or during practice time. Here are a few guidelines for athletes:

- Always feel free to talk to your coach if you are struggling with a skill or have a question about an instruction, lineup, practice time or tournament issue. Discussions about playing time or position should be saved for scheduled meeting times when a coach can focus on your concerns.
- To schedule a time to talk to your coach, ask your coach in person, email or text if he or she has time to talk, and set up a convenient time to chat.
- During tournaments, athletes should be respectful of the demands on their coach's time. As a rule of thumb, a player should approach a coach about issues of playing time or other concerns at least 20 minutes prior to the next match or 20 minutes after the previous match. Give your coach time to recover from the emotions of the match and respect the fact that he or she needs to prepare for a match or spend tournament time on recruiting or scouting concerns.
- Parents, please discuss the parent-coach conversation with your player, show support for his/her effort and stay positive about the team.

Step 2: Parent and Player Communicate with Coach: If, after the player-coach meeting, you feel the issue requires further discussion, please schedule a time for *you and your player* to meet with the coach.

- Do not outline your grievance by email or text. Use email, text or phone calls to set up meetings only, and save all discussion for the scheduled meeting.
- Never approach a coach at a tournament to discuss playing time or other grievances related to competition. This includes the entire duration of the tournament including travel time, downtime during the competition, and evenings at restaurants or team hotels. (Friendly conversations with coaches are allowed.) Violations of this policy are taken seriously.
- Parents are required to wait at least 24-hours after the final play of a tournament before raising a concern with the coach. Violation of the 24-hour rule may result in player suspension from a future match or tournament.
- We expect coaches to go into parent meetings with an open mind with the goal of listening to parent and player concerns. We ask our parents to show coaches the same courtesy.
- Outline your concern to the coach in a clear, concise manner. Please approach your coach in a professional, collaborative tone and refrain from angry exchanges or inappropriate language. Listen to your coach's response. The goal of the meeting is to gather information, resolve differences and agree on a course of action to help a player achieve her goals.
- Focus your conversation on ways to improve the situation, and identify solutions and opportunities for your player to improve.
- At no time should parents discuss another player on the team. The coach-parent meeting should be focused on the needs and concerns of your player only.

Step 3: Schedule a meeting with a member of the club leadership and/or director.

Most of the time, athletes, coaches, and parents are able to resolve conflicts on their own. In rare cases, parents and/or coaches may feel the need to approach the club director to mediate a dispute. While we hope parent-coach conflicts never reach this level, we will coordinate these meetings if needed.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Premier was founded Melissa Andersen, who love this game, and loves the opportunities it creates for young athletes. Our club has grown and hopefully continues to grow within the Bis-Man area.

Throughout it all, we have never lost sight of the fact that our coaches, athletes and families are what make this such a special club. Every decision we make, whether it's the uniform jersey, the tournaments we play or planning skills clinics, is made with the growth, development and wellbeing of our athletes in mind. We love our athletes and families. We want the best for them. We know we don't get everything right, and all of us have made mistakes along the way. But we hope that every time you interact with us - by email, by phone or in person -- you will keep in mind that we are all here for the same reason: to give your daughters the opportunity to grow and develop as volleyball athletes and strong young women on and off the court. Our loyalty is always to our

athletes and what is best for them. We will do our best to give your daughter a great experience and to solve any issues that arise during the season.