

Chapter 1: General Information and Frequently Asked Questions

As the sport of volleyball continues to grow among all age brackets, it is quite common to hear the question, "What do I have to do to start a club of my own?" Although it does require some effort, it is very gratifying for those who have chosen to provide additional opportunities for juniors to learn to play and expand their knowledge of the sport.

General Information

1. What is Junior Volleyball?

Junior volleyball is a branch of USA Volleyball, the national governing body of volleyball in the United States. USA Volleyball works in conjunction with International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) to provide equal opportunities and maximum enjoyment for participants and spectators, while maintaining the values of fair play and peaceful involvement. As a part of USA Volleyball, junior volleyball clubs must adhere to the rules, standards, and code of ethics as established by that governing body.

2. Who is eligible to play club volleyball?

Junior volleyball divides participants into like age groups for competition. There are currently four age divisions used in the Arizona Region tournament schedule: 12 and under, 14 and under, 16 and under and 18 and under. A representative team from the 13 and under, 15 and under and 17 and under age groups are also selected to represent the Arizona Region in the National and American Divisions of the Girls Junior National Championships. Teams must meet the age requirements for each of these divisions in order to participate at the national level. No age waivers are accepted at the national level. The age division breakdowns are determined and updated annually by USA Volleyball. The current age division guidelines can be obtained from the Arizona Region Office or on the AZ Region website.

Regional age waivers are available for athletes who need to apply in a lower division. However, such waivers are granted on a case by case basis only (as determined by the Arizona Region Junior Committee) and are honored only within the Arizona Region. The intent of the age waiver is for players in rural areas that have limited clubs/teams available with which to play or for players with summer birthdays that are in the grade below where their birthday would require them to play. An Age Waiver Form must be submitted prior to team placement and be approved through the Arizona Region Junior Division leadership before the player is assured a place on the lower age team. No more than two players with an age waiver may play on one team.

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Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were compiled in order to give parents insight when shopping for a club for their son and/or daughter but may be useful in gaining perspective and preparing answers to these questions as you begin to organize your club.

Age Divisions

USA Volleyball has strict guidelines concerning age. Click the "Age Definitions" link on the Juniors home page of our website, plug in a birth date and it will tell you what age division a player must play in.

What Clubs are out there?

Click on Club Directory under the Juniors link on our website for a complete list of all the clubs in the state.

- Where did athletes from local Jr Highs or High Schools play club? Were they happy there?
- Do you want a club that practices close by? Are you willing to travel 30 minutes or more to attend practice, possibly 3 times a week, with a certain club?
- Does the club offer a team in the appropriate age division?
- Does the club participate in SafeSport policies regarding coach/player and player/player communication and involvement?

Philosophy

- Know what YOUR philosophy is what do you want from a club during the season?
- Are you determined to attend Nationals - not all clubs seek bids to the National Championships? Persistent for a club that helps athletes to get scholarships? Are you looking for a club to prepare for high school? Is your son/daughter looking to play with their friends on a team?
- Ask the Club what THEIR philosophy is concerning playing time, travel team, non-travel teams, conflict with school/church functions.

Cost

- How much do tryouts cost? Is payment required for each tryout or does one fee cover all tryout sessions?
- How much is due up front after committing to the club?
- How often are payments made? Monthly, 1 or 2 installments?
- Are travel expenses included in the payments or are they separate?
- Are Nationals or Post-Season play included? If not, when is that payment due? Is that refundable if the team does not make it to Post-Season play?
- What if my son/daughter gets hurt during the season? Do I have to pay for the part of the season when my son/daughter is hurt?
- Is fundraising available to offset the cost?

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- What player equipment is covered in the cost? jerseys? warm-ups? shoes? kneepads? socks? bags?

Members on the team

- How many players are kept on the team?
- Is playing time guaranteed?
- When will the final roster for each team be determined?
- If the coach and/or the team is not consistent with what our family was told before we signed the contract, will we be granted a refund and allowed to go to a different club?

Level of Commitment

- Many players are active in other sports or activities. Try to have a feel for what your schedule might be like in your other activities so you will know if there are any or many conflicts. Always check with the club to see what is tolerated.
- Very Cooperative - they will work around anything and everything
- Cooperative within reason - there are a few instances that the club may excuse you for being late or absent.
- Full Commitment - some clubs expect some or all of their teams to put club volleyball first. They expect you at every practice and every tournament.

Practices

- How many practices are there per week? Will this number change preceding a tournament?
- How long is each practice?
- Where are the practices located?
- Are parents permitted to watch?

Tournaments

- How many tournaments are played in each month?
- How many are in-state tournaments?
- How many are out-of-state tournaments?

Travel

- How many tournaments are "travel" tournaments? Travel most likely means out of state or multi-day tournaments in another part of the state where overnight stay is required.
- How are travel arrangements handled?
- Does the club offer parent travel?

Coaches

- How many coaches are staffed per team?
- What are their qualifications?

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Communications

- How does the club communicate with the parents/players? Do they have a web site? Monthly meetings? Newsletters? Handbook?
- What is the chain of command if I have an issue?

Other Perks/Requirements

- Car Pooling?
- Club/Team outings throughout the year?
- Clinics/camps throughout the year?
- College recruiting help?
- Does the club have their own facility?

Attend an AZ Region Club Night

- The AZ Region will offer several Club Nights in the month of October or November. These will be advertised on the website and in the newsletter. Clubs will be allowed to participate and talk to parents and players about their club. The Club Nights are held in conjunction with a local university or college women's volleyball match.

Participate in the Open House Period

- The Open House Period is a 10 day window prior to the start of tryouts that a club can offer an open house and evaluations. No commitments to the club may be made. Any offers made are NOT BINDING. Binding offers and commitments may only take place following the official tryout session - not before.
- Participate in the Open House Period to talk to different clubs prior to tryouts. It will give you the opportunity to meet the club director and possibly your daughter's potential coach. There may even be some evaluation of your daughter that takes place at the Open House. Here is where you want to ask lots of questions.
- If you still have questions, please email or call the directors. They will be happy to answer your questions.
- Understand that ANY offers made regarding your daughter's team placement prior to the official tryouts are not binding.

Committing to a Club

The AZ Region and USA Volleyball consider a commitment to a club to be very serious and to last for the entire season. That means that you are not to change clubs mid-season. Please do your homework before committing to a club.

The business relationship between a club and a player is outside the purview of the Arizona Region of USA Volleyball. Each club is an independent. Financial issues between player and club are to be handled as any other business arrangement. The Arizona Region cannot legally enter into this business arrangement. The Arizona Region does have some regulations as to what clubs can do but not in regards to the contractual business operations with their players.

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Know the Rules

Refer to the Policies Manual for more information regarding the Arizona Region recruiting rules and guidelines, tryout dates, and other important information. It is also very important for parents to be aware of the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) participation regulations and the NCAA recruiting and participation regulations to avoid any inadvertent violation of these rules that would preclude a junior player from further participation in high school or collegiate volleyball team participation. Many coaches do not know or understand the rules and may offer advice that could jeopardize eligibility.

A player that is participating on any level (Freshmen, JV or Varsity) high school team **is not eligible** to participate in skills camps, clinics or open gyms from the start of the high school season in August until the end of their school team participation. Any club that allows any high school player to participate in clinics, camps or open gyms prior to the end of their school team involvement is subject to sanction for the upcoming season.