

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS REGARDING GATEWAY USAV CLUB VOLLEYBALL

- Q. I am confused about the differences between JVA, AAU, and USAV/Gateway Region. What are the distinctions?
- A. USA Volleyball (USAV) is the National Governing Body (NGB) of our sport in the US. They answer to the US Olympic & Para Olympic Committee (USOPC) which in turn answers to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). USA Volleyball oversees all aspects of Olympic, international, and national level VB competition for youth, junior, adult, senior, boys, girls, men, and women. For regional level competition, USAV affiliates with 40 geographic Regional Volleyball Associations and provides an operating infrastructure for the Regions (Gateway included) as well as with each other. USAV Membership fees provide the operating budget for the regions, and directly fund our USA Volleyball Olympic and National Teams. The United States is the only developed country in the world that does not subsidize their Olympic teams, so it is our membership that provides their funding. JVA and AAU are two unaffiliated leagues with their own operating standards and revenue streams, and do not monetarily support USAV national teams or programming.
- Q. So, what do the differences between the organizations mean for me?
- A. USAV Membership and competition have benefits including, but not limited to: secondary insurance for practices and competition, region staff to assist with club questions and grievances, a competitive path for qualification to USAV Junior Nationals, a Talent ID pipeline for youth, junior, and beach national training team programs, as well as Regionally organized collegiate Talent ID camps for college recruitable athletes of our region – dependent on NCAA Recruiting rules and windows. USAV has strict up-to-date requirements (SafeSport and Current Background Screens) for adults associated with USAV affiliated junior clubs that is mandated by the US Congress to monitor the safety of youth and junior players in addition to specific Child Protective Insurance covering all members. Non-USAV/Gateway Region clubs or teams do not have access to these benefits, nor do they have to abide by the rigorous requirements set by the USOPC and USAV. Non-USAV members are ineligible to participate in USAV/Gateway Region sanctioned events, such as Gateway Sanctioned local events, Gateway Collegiate ID camp series, Regional Championships, National Qualifiers, or USAV Junior Nationals.
- Q. So, what's the difference between the different Nationals and what are Bids?
- A. USAV Junior National Championships (JNC) are the pinnacle of Junior VB competition. Teams for the USAV JNC must compete to earn the right to attend this event. USAV Bids are the route to the USAV JNC and may only be earned at specific national or regional events. A team is only accepted to the JNC if they are awarded a Bid at one of these specific events. This includes USAV Boys National Bid Events, Girls National Qualifiers, or our Region's Girls Bid Events. USAV believes in direct competition to earn the right to compete against the best. JVA hosts their own Qualification events thru AAU, and only recently began calling their "free entry" a "bid" to attend their AAU Junior National Tournament. Theirs's is a "pay to play" event hosted at Walt Disney's Wide World of Sports resort in Orlando Florida. Teams of all levels may pay their way to their national event.
- Q. So If I'm not playing on one of the very top teams, what is the benefit of trying to earn a bid to attend Nationals?
- A. As the Olympic Creed states: "Citius, Altius, Fortius" – or translated from Greek, "Faster, Higher, Stronger". As Olympic coaches often note – the saying does not say "FastEST, HighEST, StrongEST." Faster, Higher, Stronger notes that as coaches, athletes, and human beings, we constantly STRIVE to be better. We compete against one another in good faith and fair play to become better than we were yesterday. USAV and the USOPC strongly believe that striving towards the goal of earning your way to the Junior National Championship Tournament ***means something*** – players are expending their efforts and energies towards meeting one of several goals for their season. This same kind of expenditure of blood, sweat, and tears are a direct mirror to real life, and provide opportunities for young athletes to experience the joy of meeting their goals. More importantly (and more often than not), players encounter adversity, and do not meet a stated goal, and the life lessons to be learned thru that experience will better serve the athlete as they continue to grow older and are developing the necessary coping mechanisms to navigate life as a professional adult. The act of competing for something of true meaning and value prompts real growth, regardless of outcome.
- Q. How will I know if I am trying out for a JVA club or USAV/Gateway Region Club?
- A. JVA Clubs/Teams are not bound to have tryouts or follow Gateway Region infrastructure rules and may accept players on their teams at any time. USAV/Gateway Region teams may ONLY tryout after a certain date, to ensure all clubs and players have the opportunity of a level playing field – clubs can evaluate players, and players may select among the multitude of clubs. We strongly recommend that you do your research and find out if the team/club you are trying out for, is indeed a USAV/Gateway Region Club, and are planning to play in USAV/Gateway Sanctioned events.

Q. Can a coach require a player to commit or promise to play for their team/club at or before the tryout?

A. That varies depending on the date of the tryout. For tryouts held on the first available weekend, the coach must allow a "waiting period" for the chosen athlete to make the decision on whether or not to commit or reject an offer. Coercion to commit before the 7pm Sunday deadline the 1st available weekend of tryouts is unethical and prohibited. Tryouts held after the initial tryout period/weekend may be asked to commit immediately after the tryout.

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. A waiting period is not required for clubs holding tryouts on or after the official commitment dates and times listed above for each respective division. 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 the player will be released to find another team.

Q. Are coaches allowed to recruit me for next season while I'm playing in my current season?

A. NO ! – coaches from a different club may not attempt to recruit you from your current team while you and your team are currently in season. This is a serious breach of ethical rules by a coach or club. The official USAV Club Season ends at the conclusion of the boys and girls Junior National Championships. A team's playing season may conclude earlier if their final event finishes before the end of the Boys & Girls JNCs. Active invitations to a club's camps, clinics, or private instruction may constitute recruitment.

Q. Once out of season, how many contacts can a coach make in the off & preseason (between seasons before tryouts)? And what would be considered appropriate contact?

A. Coaches should NOT be making an excessive number of contacts in the preseason with parents or players (example: a mailer, one or two phone calls or personal contacts). Excessive contact is subjective, so it is a player/parent's responsibility to discourage excessive coercion if warranted. Contacts should be limited to basic communication – a couple of emails, fliers, or phone calls. Exchange of "quid pro quo" (Promising a spot if you take lessons for money or gifts, or "scholarship") is unethical, as is any exchange or gifting of money/gift cards/event tickets, free travel/tuition/dues as possible incentive to join a club/team.

Q. Can a coach guarantee a player a spot on their team prior to tryouts?

A. Prior to tryouts no spots may be guaranteed. A coach that hints towards guaranteeing spots or positional playing time is treading on questionably ethical grounds, considering coaches know this very specific rule. A coach that continually makes promises does not have your best interests in mind.

Q. How can I find out more information about a particular club or coach?

A. Read the Junior Club Profiles and Parent Page located on the Gateway website (www.gatewayvb.org). Also, read the Club Information Sheet provided at tryouts. Get additional feedback from other parents with club volleyball experience. Check with parents and players who have played for a team that you may be interested in.

Q. My child wants to attend a tryout to get warmed up. Is this ok?

A. No, players should not be attending a tryout for the sake of a warm-up. If they are not interested in that club, they are taking an opportunity away from someone else.

Q. How do I handle multiple offers my child receives the weekend of tryouts?

A. It is recommended that a player only have two open offers at any given time over the tryout weekend. This means that if you attend more than two tryouts and you receive a third offer, you should immediately call the coach of the team you are not interested in and let them know. This will allow them to offer a position to the next person on their list. A player can have an unlimited number of alternate positions.

Q. I do not want to play on a team with 12 players. Is it ok to ask a coach how many players they intend to carry on their team?

A. Parents should ask a coach how many players they expect to carry on their roster. This may make a difference in the decision-making process.

Q. What are relevant questions to ask a coach before choosing a club?

A. *How often, how long and where will practices be and is there an attendance policy?

*Are we competing in USAV/Gateway Region or are we AAU/JVA?

*How often will this team travel and what extra expenses will be involved?

*What are the club fees and what do they include (uniforms, gym rental, coaches' travel, tournament fees)

*What are the club/coach expectations for this season?

*Will the coach accept age waived players? Note: accepting age waived players would then place the team under certain restrictions regarding event participation. For more information on teams registered with age waived players, ask the coach or contact the Gateway region office.

- Q. A coach has guaranteed my child a certain position and amount of playing time. Are coaches allowed to make this kind of guarantee?
- A. A coach may say this, however, injury, attendance, commitment, player's failure to advance, discipline etc., may all be reasons for this to change. Coaches will play your child where they will have the most success on that team, which may be a different position than originally expected. Playing time is at the discretion of the coach.
- Q. The coach is telling me I can play for their club at a reduced rate compared to other players. Is this ok?
- A. The offering of monies for club fees/dues or "scholarships" to athletes is not supported by the Gateway Region. Although there have been recent landmark court cases involving Collegiate athletes, the NFHS (National Federation of High Schools) has unequivocally stated that High School Students (and younger) are Amateurs and may not benefit monetarily from their participation in sports. Reducing club fees due to a work program could also cause negative consequences for the athlete, depending on formality of payroll, setup, and taxes.
- Q. I have heard the coach/team can get a college scholarship for my child if they play for that team?
- A. Parents need to consider how valid that offer is considering the range of possibilities throughout the year. Parents should also research the number of athletes that play the sport and compare that to available scholarship opportunities from year to year.
- Q. How do I know which team my child is trying out for when a club has two teams of the same age group?
- A. As a parent you need to ask the club to explain their policy on this and they should be able to tell you.
- Q. Do players float from team to team throughout the season?
- A. A player affiliates with only one club for the season. The club representative should be able to tell you, at the time of tryouts, if they plan to move players between teams within the club on a regular basis.
- Q. Are coaches required to have any screenings or background checks before they coach in the Gateway Region?
- A. Any Adult affiliated with any junior programming (including, but not limited to - coaches, team representatives, chaperones, referees, scorekeepers) must Complete the federally mandated SafeSport ACT and have a USAV criminal background check prior to affiliating with a junior club in the Gateway Region. Coaches must also be, at minimum, IMPACT certified as well. USAV's criminal background check is updated/expanded every year to include new segments of the criminal code to meet USOPC standards.
- Q. Do I need to be present the weekend of tryouts or can I drop my child off?
- A. Parents are not required to stay for the duration of the tryout, but at each tryout, a parent's signature is required on the waiver form of every individual under the age of 18 who is trying out. A tryout waiver form is required for each tryout, but the form may be filled out and signed before each tryout to expedite the process.
- Q. Can I stay to watch tryouts to ensure my kid has a fair shot?
- A. Whether a tryout is open or closed to the public is at the discretion of the club, although the region encourages transparency. However, local mandates and businesses may limit the capacity of a facility to accommodate spectators.
- Q. Can a coach require a player to commit to their team at the tryout?
- A. That varies depending on the date of the tryout. For tryouts held on the first available weekend, the coach must allow a "waiting period" for the chosen athlete to make the decision on whether or not to commit. Tryouts held after the initial tryout period may be asked to commit immediately after the tryout.
- Q. If my child and I sign the Player Commitment letter, and we get a better offer from a club that is more convenient for us later in the tryout weekend, can we switch clubs?
- A. No, there are no player transfers once you've signed with a club. It falls upon your shoulders to research the clubs you are interested in playing for.
- Q. What if I've signed the Commitment letter, but I haven't paid any fees to the club? Can I still switch clubs, since money has not exchanged hands?
- A. No, once a child/parent has EITHER signed a commitment letter, OR paid fees to a club at a registration meeting, that player may not switch clubs for this season.

If the tryout start date is Friday, **July 26, 2024**, the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, July 28, 2024**. If the tryout start date is Friday, **September 6, 2024**, the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, September 8, 2024**. If the tryout start date is Friday, **October 25, 2024** the **official** commitment date/time is 7 pm **Sunday, October 27, 2024**.

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Don't hesitate to ask any other questions you might have!!

Reasonable Player/Parent Expectations for Coaches

Coaches should:

- promote the game of volleyball as positively as possible.
- support and understand the Gateway region's policies.
- support other Gateway teams when traveling out of region.
- be willing to explain extra costs up front to parents and any possible fundraising opportunities.
- know when the team will practice, where and for how long-
- have an understanding and willingness to explain the club's policy on placing players on teams within the club when there are multiple teams in an age division-
- explain to players/parents what they anticipate regarding the competitive level of the team (elite vs developmental, age waived, etc.).
- provide information on how many tournaments and weekend trips they expect to make.
- share with prospective players how many participants they intend to keep on their roster.
- explain to players/parents that they should have realistic expectations regarding playing time.
- not make excessive contacts with a player or parents in preseason. (Example: a mailer or 1 or 2 contacts is enough to let a player know the coach is interested).
- not pressure a player or parents in the decision-making process during tryouts and respect their preference once the player has accepted a position from another club.