

## **A Perfect Fit? What to ask when choosing a volleyball club**

When new to the club volleyball scene, it can be a daunting task to find the right club for your junior player. Region staff will not recommend a club for you, however, the staff will recommend that you contact the clubs you are interested in and ask LOTS of questions. The Region encourages individuals to contact club directors personally as opposed to going by hearsay from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. The Region website lists all the clubs and their contacts. Below are just a few issues to consider when you are shopping for a club team.

### **What age division does my child fall into?**

USA Volleyball has strict guidelines concerning ages. You can view the Age Definitions for the upcoming season on the region website.

### **What clubs are out there?**

Visit the Juniors Club Contact information at [www.imvolleyball.org](http://www.imvolleyball.org) and determine where the clubs are located. Do you want a club that practices in your city? Are you willing to travel 30 minutes, 1 hour or even 2 hours to practice with a certain club?

### **Does that club offer your age division?**

Not all clubs offer all ages or levels of play.

### **Philosophy**

Know what YOUR philosophy is... what do you want from a club during this season? Are you bound and determined to get to Nationals? Persistent for a club to help you get a scholarship? Are you wanting to get better for high school? Are you wanting to play with your friends on a team? You have to know what you are shopping for. Ask the Club and their coaches what THEIR philosophy is.

### **Cost**

How much does it cost to tryout? Do I have to pay for each tryout? Or does the one fee pay for all tryout session? How much is due up front once committed to the club? Can I make monthly payments? Are travel expenses included? Does that include Hotel? Air? (Parent travel expenses are always extra!) Are Nationals or Post-season included? If not, when is that dues? Is that refundable if you don't make it to the post-season? What if my son/daughter gets hurt during the season? Is fundraising available to offset the cost? What player equipment is covered in the cost? Shoes? Kneepads? Socks? How many jerseys? How many shorts?

### **Members on the team**

How many players are kept per team? Is playing time guaranteed?

### **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 what conflicts there may be. Always check with the club to see what is tolerated. *Very Cooperative* – they'll work around anything and everything. *Cooperative within reason* – There are few instances that the club may excuse you for being late or absent. *Full Commitment* – Some clubs expect some or all of their players to put club volleyball first. They are expected at every practice and every tournament.

### **Practices**

How many practices per week? How many practices if there is a tournament that weekend? How long is each practice? Where are the practices located?

### **Tournaments**

How many tournaments are offered for the teams in that age group? Is that too many or not enough for you? Where are the tournaments located? Out-of-state? In-state? Combo?

### **Travel**

How many tournaments are “travel” tournaments? How are travel arrangements handled? Are any arrangements made for the parents? (Remember this is usually in addition to season dues)

### **Coaches**

How many coaches per team? What are their qualifications?

### **Communication**

How does the club communicate to Parents/Members? Via web? Monthly meetings? Newsletters?

### **Other Perks**

What else does the club offer? Club/Team outings throughout the year? Clinics throughout the year? College recruiting help? Have their own facility?

### **Attend the Club Information/Parent Meeting**

These meetings allow the club to present to you what they are all about. It can also give you an opportunity to meet the club director and possibly your daughter’s potential coach. Here is where you want to ask lots of questions. Some clubs hold meetings before any of their tryouts, some will hold meetings on the same day as their tryouts and others will have a combination. If you STILL have questions, please email or call the directors. They will be happy to answer your questions.

### **Committing to a Club**

The USAV guide states that you can only represent one club during one season. That means you cannot change clubs in mid season. Please do your homework before committing to a club.

Should you happen to know of something as a parent that is helpful in knowing before committing to a club that is not on this list, please contact the region office and we will gladly add those suggestions to help all in making decisions. Thank you very much.