

## Starting a Junior Club Program

The task of running a Junior club program is demanding, but very rewarding. To help ensure success, this section will assist in ensuring everything has been considered from a practice facility to finding athletes and coaches to participate. The following procedures and recommendations will aid in operating the club. The continued growth in both boys' and girls' Junior programs is an asset to the Old Dominion Region. Being involved with young athletes, helping them develop their skills, and enjoying healthy competition is truly a privilege. This handbook outlines tools and suggestions to help make this a rewarding experience.

### First Steps

Determine if there are any other volleyball programs in the immediate area. This may make a difference as to the type of program that is wanted or needed to be started (e.g., 14 and under only, girls only, etc.). In addition, this information will be needed to choose a name that will identify and set apart this club from neighboring clubs. After choosing a name, it is good idea to make a list of the administrative tasks that need to be accomplished including:

- a. Establish a formal business name.
- b. Establish a business bank account.
- c. Determine the type of business to establish (i.e., for profit or not for profit corporation, sole proprietorship, etc.).
- d. Develop a board of directors or board of advisors.
- e. Contact the region to notify them of the club ([ODregion@comcast.net](mailto:ODregion@comcast.net)).

### Structuring the Club Program

Establishing a club program is a huge responsibility. A club program provides athletes an opportunity to learn more about the sport of volleyball in a controlled, educated atmosphere. The program provides athletes a chance to travel to places they may have never been. The program adds to the value of middle and high school programs by providing year round training opportunities, as well as increasing the athletes' chances of being seen and recruited by collegiate programs. The club program also shows a commitment to the support and development of the Old Dominion Region.

Developing a club philosophy and mission statement will help answer the question "Why start a club program?". These statements are the framework of the program and will provide guidance in every aspect from choosing coaches to deciding travel plans.

Before turning the goals and objectives into a philosophy, it will be helpful to set a “structure” for the club. In doing so, consider the following:

- What services will the club offer?
- What type of training will the club provide: elite programs; competitive programs; developmental programs; or a combination of these?
- What type of athletes/teams will the club target?
- Will the club start with a small program and allow for smooth, constant growth, or does the area need to have an immediate impact with a large club?
- Will the club encompass all age groups or limited age groups?
- Are there desires for local, state, or national travel for competition?

There may be small snags along the way, such as high school coaches attempting to prevent their athletes from participating in the club. The Virginia General Assembly passed a law a number of years ago (the Independent Team Rule [28-11-1]) which allows athletes to play the same sport in the same season. It can be found on the Virginia High School League's (VHSL) Web Site ([www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)) and states in part,

*“During the sport’s season for the relevant sport, a student may, while a member of a school squad or team engaged in interscholastic sports, become a member of or participate with an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school’s control so long as such participation does not conflict with the scheduled activities of the school squad or team. No school or student shall be declared ineligible for participation in interscholastic sports because participation by a student as a member of an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school’s control during the sport’s season for the relevant sport.”*

## Coaches

Selection of the coaching staff is one of the most crucial decisions made in starting a Junior program. Coaches form the stability for the entire program and therefore, must agree with the club’s goals and objectives. Look to local schools, colleges, graduated club players, and adult players when searching for these coaches. Carefully select the best-qualified coaches in the area.

Make sure that each coach can commit to the level of involvement required. They need to understand that accepting this responsibility goes beyond showing up on the court for practices and competitions. Preparation time for practices and competitions, travel time, player or parent conferences, supervision, and staff meetings are a few things for which they need to prepare. They will also be required to meet certain coaches’ training requirements which may mean they will have to attend a few clinics throughout the

year. When expansion in club membership becomes a reality, ensure the club can maintain quality coaching to match the growth.

### **USA Volleyball Junior Coach Requirements**

All coaches must be at least 18 years old and recommended to be at least three years older than all players registered on the team they coach.

All coaches must be certified (minimum IMPACT) by USA Volleyball to coach in any National Tournament, National Qualifier, Bid Tournament, or Old Dominion Region event.

All coaches must complete the SafeSport program offered by Team USA. Beginning in 2016-2017, all rostered adults must complete the SafeSport program. That curriculum can be obtained for free at <https://training.teamusa.org/store>. Be sure to enter your USA Volleyball number upon creation of your membership account so that your certification will be logged in Webpoint.

All coaches must inform both their players and their players' parents or guardians that they must sign a Release and Waiver of Liability Form before they can become USA Volleyball members.

All coaches must inform both their players and their players' parents or guardians of the Old Dominion Region Transfer Policy. This policy prohibits a player from transferring clubs during the season once that player has represented a club in a USA Volleyball or Old Dominion Region sanctioned tournament.

Coaches will serve as a positive role model and provide a positive atmosphere in practices and matches. Coaches will be courteous, respectful, and polite to all players, parents, other coaches, and officials.

Coaches will work with and develop every member of their team, not just the starters.

No coach will participate in, require, or condone any action by their players which is illegal under either the civil or criminal code.

A rostered chaperone or coach must be present at all times during team supervised travel and competition.

No coach shall allow, encourage, condone, or require any behavior that threatens any player's high school, USA Volleyball, or NCAA eligibility.

Once a player has committed either verbally or in writing to a team or club for the season by attending a team meeting or practice, no coach from another team or club, nor players under the direction of another team or club coach, nor parents under the direction of another coach may contact that player for the purpose of persuading them to leave the club to which they have committed. This does not

prohibit anyone from talking to another player or giving the player or her/his parents or guardians information about their club tryouts, practices, organization, etc., if it is requested by the player or her/his parent(s) or guardian(s). Such information must not relate to any promises, future considerations, or inducements to leave their present club or team.

All Old Dominion Region (ODR) Junior coaches must register in the Old Dominion Region, submit to a background screening check, and electronically sign the Coaches' Code of Ethics before their registration is accepted or they will not be eligible to coach in any USA Volleyball Junior program. Any violation of the code of ethics may result in sanctions being taken against the coach or club or both. These sanctions may extend to the loss of eligibility of the coach, player, team or club.

## Facilities

Securing facilities is almost always a challenge for club directors. Limit the number of sites or venues in which to practice. Try to form a relationship with a local school, church, recreation site or YMCA. The club may be able to trade off services or equipment for rental costs. Obtain facilities that provide safe, regulation equipment. The number of courts required will depend on the number of athletes and teams the club will service. Most organizations have no more than two teams per court; however, the ideal situation is one team per court. All facilities should be consistent with the USA Volleyball Domestic Competition Regulations.

When you have your practice venue(s) selected, request a Certificate of Insurance (COI) from the Old Dominion Region. These COIs are venue-specific, but one flat fee will cover multiple venues.

## Cost and Tuition

How much will it cost? Although the club may initially start a program to provide a service for young athletes, operating in an organized, professional manner will allow the club to offer a more beneficial, well-rounded program. The club cannot afford to make the mistake of operating in a non-businesslike manner. Costs for participation will vary depending on the type of organization formed. Consider the following:

### **Basic Expenses**

- a. Registration (USA Volleyball, region, and local club)
- b. Coaches' fees and expenses
- c. Uniforms
- d. Travel
- e. Gym rental
- f. Equipment (balls, nets, carts, bags, first-aid kit, etc.)

### **Other Possible Expenses**

- a. Additional liability insurance
- b. General overhead and administrative expenses
- c. Labor expenses

Many times, new programs scale down their cost to attract a larger number of players. The club must bear in mind that it needs to provide a safe, organized program which definitely means there are expenses that need to be met. A club should not reduce its fees to a point where it is not able to operate on a professional basis and provide proper services. Some of the coaching staff may volunteer. However, quality coaches deserve to be paid just as any other professional is paid for their services.

Programs can be developed within the club to help athletes find a way to help reduce tuition fees. Players and parents can trade work for dues and fees or the director or a parents' group can initiate fundraising activities. However, safeguards must be in place to ensure the club does not do anything to jeopardize an athlete's college eligibility. The club must focus on the value of the program rather than its low cost.

## Grants and Assistance

USA Volleyball partners with many organizations to provide grant assistance to various programming areas in our sport, including the Grassroots Outreach (GRO) Grant of up to \$5,000. The GRO Grant is available to USA Volleyball Regional Volleyball Associations, clubs, grassroots programs, or individuals that wish to further the training of coaches, players, and/or parents through clinics or various programming. This grant may also be used to help fund facility and equipment needs. This grant is available for indoor, sand, and sitting volleyball. Recipients are selected through an application process. Please see the [USA Volleyball grassroots](#) webpage for additional grant details and applications.

The Old Dominion Region also has resources available to help establish and grow clubs in underrepresented areas. Please contact the Junior Coordinator for information.

## Time to Meet the Public

Now that the basic plan is outlined, it is time to make the community aware that the club is in operation. The club can hold an informational meeting with tryouts scheduled a few weeks later, or these two sessions can be combined. Some clubs use a simple "show up and join" process without scheduling tryouts. The purpose of tryouts may be to cut off enrollment or it may be to take a look at the athletes in order to group them into appropriate teams based on age and ability. In either case, the club will need to accomplish the same things and must **Be Prepared**.

The club should produce a club handbook that can be handed out to every participant which completely outlines the club's program to include philosophy, objectives and goals, financial expectations, practice and competition plans, conduct policy, coaches' responsibilities and biographies, parent expectations, uniform requirements, etc. The club will also need the appropriate registration forms. As many coaches as possible should attend and be introduced at the informational meeting. The club should discuss the tryout sessions and the selection process. If the club arranges a demonstration of drills, the athletes who participate in the demonstration must have filled out the necessary paperwork to be covered by USA Volleyball insurance before they step on the court.

To be covered by the USA Volleyball insurance policy, tryouts must be sanctioned. If the club holds a tryout, planning should include a system for recording statistical data that is needed to properly select the teams. Plan the drills

and testing stations well in advance and ensure they are sufficiently supervised. Have all of the necessary paperwork prepared so that each athlete is covered by USA Volleyball insurance. Be careful not to overextend the amount of time scheduled for tryouts since exhaustion can lead to athlete injury.

## Equipment and Uniforms

Equipment needs will vary depending on arrangements made with the facilities being used. Necessary equipment includes:

volleyballs	ball carts	nets	antennas
net standards	ball bags	medical kit	floor tape

There are many brands and sources for the above items. Check with established clubs and facilities to survey what they use. Check also for vendors on the Internet.

Items often forgotten are coaches' shirts and shorts. Providing coaches with a "uniform" accomplishes a few things. It supports the tremendous value of the coach to the program and it readily identifies who is in charge at a glance. It also projects an air of professionalism that enhances the club image.

Players are required to dress uniformly during competitions (refer to the USA Volleyball Domestic Competition Regulations). It is required that a player retain the same number on each of their jerseys. The jersey must have a number no less than 4" on the front and 6" on the back. The number must be centered on the front and back. Numbers may range from 1 to 99, must be clearly visible, and must be permanently attached (no tape). The type of uniform selected will vary depending on the type of program, the amount of competition, and the financial arrangements to purchase the uniforms. Items to consider as uniform pieces or equipment include the following: jerseys; shorts or compression shorts (tights); knee pads; socks; shoes; warm-up jacket; warm-up pants; cover shorts; sweatshirt; sweatpants; and team shirts to wear between matches. The Internet is an excellent resource for finding the clothing equipment listed here. Other sources for jerseys include any local screen-printing company or sporting goods store.

## Paperwork, Contracts, and Registration

All of the forms required by the Old Dominion Region and USA Volleyball can be obtained from the ODR Web Site ([www.odrvb.org](http://www.odrvb.org)). Clubs may develop additional forms to fill specific needs within their own organization. Coaches' contracts are beneficial as they set forth an understanding of the requirements and responsibilities of the coaches as well as those of the club prior to the season. If a club develops a coaches' contract, be sure to include a fee structure, practice and competition

requirements, supervision requirements, personal training requirements, the duration of the contract and the policy if any of the provisions are not followed. The contract must require a signature.

Another form that can be used is a player/parent contract. This includes all of the information that a coaches' contract includes specific to the athlete and parent. Additional useful information can be gathered through a club registration form. Parents' occupations, the past experience of the athlete and family in fundraising, and how long an athlete has been involved in sports are all valuable pieces of information that the club can use. There are many other questions that can be brainstormed with the coaches and club staff to develop a beneficial form.

Any forms developed must be reviewed by legal counsel, should accomplish a specific objective, and should provide the club the information they are looking for without encroaching on an individual's basic rights.

## Old Dominion Region Junior Codes of Behavior

### **Athletes shall:**

- Be alcohol-free and drug-free.
- Play by the rules of volleyball.
- Use positive verbal and physical behavior, controlling temper and aggression (intent to do harm).
- Tell the truth about another person's involvement in or knowledge of something that violates the rules.
- Show fair play by treating all those involved in the match with dignity and respect.
- Treat others as they would like to be treated.
- Work hard and honestly to improve performance and participation.
- Maintain a positive self-image by playing volleyball for enjoyment.
- Refrain from any antagonistic behavior.

### **Spectators shall:**

- Respect the rights of others and treat the visiting teams and their spectators courteously.
- Attend Junior volleyball events alcohol-free and drug-free.
- Abide by federal, state, and local laws while attending any match.
- Cheer positively for their team rather than against them or their opponents, using socially acceptable language.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the officials, to include youth work teams, without taunting or approaching them during the match, between sets, or at the end of a match.

- Applaud good performances by all teams.
- Use items to cheer with that are of a non-violent nature.
- Discourage all forms of violent behavior.
- Use only designated smoking areas that are clearly posted.
- Use litter receptacles to properly dispose of trash.
- Abide by all event facility rules.

**Parents shall:**

- Promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire to win.
- Remember that their children play volleyball for the child's enjoyment, not the parents'.
- Encourage good sportsmanship through their actions by demonstrating positive support for all players.
- Provide support for coaches and officials working with the athletes to provide a positive experience for all.
- Demand their athlete treat all players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- Be a positive role model for their athlete by treating all players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators with dignity and respect in language, attitude, behavior, and mannerisms.
- Not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
- Inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of their athlete or the safety of others.
- Respect and demand their athlete respects the property and equipment used at any sports facility, both home and away



## Old Dominion Region of USA Volleyball

**SPECTATOR/PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**  
(This legally binding document may be reproduced as often as necessary)

**IMPORTANT NOTICE – ENTRY TO ANY PRIVATELY SANCTIONED EVENT IS GRANTED AS A COURTESY. IF YOU ENTER/ATTEND ANY OLD DOMINION REGION OR USA VOLLEYBALL SANCTIONED EVENT, YOU AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING CODE OF CONDUCT GUIDELINES:**

### **I WILL:**

1. I WILL abide by the official rules of USA Volleyball and Old Dominion Region.
2. I WILL display good sportsmanship at all times.
3. I WILL encourage my child and his/her team, regardless of the outcome on the court.
4. I WILL educate myself on the rules of each playing facility.
5. I WILL honor the rules of the host and the host facility.
6. I WILL generate goodwill by being polite and respectful to those around me at all events.
7. I WILL direct my child to speak directly with his/her coach when coaching decisions are made that may be confusing or unclear.
8. I WILL redirect any negative comments from others to the respective Event Director or Program Administrator.
9. I WILL immediately notify the Event Director and/or Program Administrator in the event that I witness any illegal activity.
10. I WILL support the policies and guidelines of the team/club that I represent.
11. I WILL acknowledge effort and good performance, remembering that all of the players in this event are amateur athletes.
12. I WILL model exemplary spectator behavior while attending all events.
13. I WILL respect the history and tradition of the sport of volleyball by being a good ambassador.

### **I WILL NOT:**

1. I WILL NOT harass or attempt to intimidate the officials or work teams.
2. I WILL NOT coach my child from the bleachers and/or sidelines.
3. I WILL NOT criticize my child's coach or his/her teammates.
4. I WILL NOT participate in any game or game-like activities unless I have a current membership card with the Old Dominion Region.
5. I WILL NOT bring and/or carry any firearms at any Old Dominion Region event.
6. I WILL NOT bring, purchase, or consume alcohol at any Youth/Junior volleyball event.

**Note:** Any violation of this Code of Conduct will result in you being asked to leave the site/facility, and may result in you possibly being banned from attending future Old Dominion Region sanctioned events. The Event Director has the final say regarding their individual event. Local law enforcement will be contacted if necessary to resolve any disputes or altercations. Questions or concerns may be directed to the Commissioner of the Old Dominion Region.

## Budget and Finances

As it is with any business -- and running a club is a business -- without proper planning and supervision of finances, the philosophical reasons why a club exists won't mean a thing. Maintain a separate bank account for all club operations. Seek out educated accounting advice if the club does not have expertise in that area. Develop a realistic budget and stick to it. It is better to overestimate expenses and underestimate revenue. Don't depend on running events such as tournaments to inject operating capital into the club program or to cover dues for the athletes. Spend a great deal of time working and reworking the budget. This needs to be done early and done properly before the tuition fees are announced. It is extremely difficult to go back to the parents and say "...I didn't expect to have to buy this many volleyballs. I need to increase your fees by \$100." Plan ahead.

## Where to Compete

For all Junior programs there are many levels of competitive options. The tournaments in which a team participates will depend on the structure of the club and the services the club provides. The following is a list of competitive options:

- Competitions held in the Old Dominion Region.
- Competitions held outside of the Old Dominion Region. These tournaments are open or invitational events that allow participants from any region to enter.
- Nationally sanctioned qualifier or bid tournaments. These tournaments are part of the USA Volleyball Junior National Championship structure through which teams vie for bids to the Open Division or Club Division of the US Junior National Championships.
- **United States Junior National Championships.** These events are the year-end goal for many club programs. They are the most competitive tournaments in the United States and determine our national age group champions.