



Garden Empire Volleyball Association

Parents' Guide to Club Volleyball

Choosing a volleyball club is a difficult decision. It is a serious commitment in both time and money. This guide is intended to help your family make an educated decision about selecting an appropriate club or team for your player. You will want to contact prospective clubs and coaches and ask at a minimum the following questions:

- What is the goal of the club, is it competitive, recreational, or developmental ?
- What are the projected fees and what do they cover (gym costs, coach stipends, club dues, uniforms etc.)?
- If the team travels to out of town tournaments, who covers the coach's expenses (traveling costs, hotels, meals). Are travel fees separate, or included, and are there any other additional costs? Tabulate all fees to compare costs between clubs.
- How many practices are held per week; when, where, and how long are they?
- Will my practice schedule change or will it remain the same throughout the season?
- What are the expectations of the club with regard to the commitment from the player? What happens if I miss a practice or tournament - possibly due to other sports, sickness, or religious events?
- Are practices held during major holidays - if so what days and times?
- Is other training expected, or available, and at what time and cost?
- Will the team participate in local, regional or national level tournaments? How many and when will the schedule be confirmed?
- Is the team an open or club level team and will the team participate in National Qualifiers, National Championships, or other end of Season Tournaments? If so, what are the additional costs?
- What are the travel policies - does the player travel with the team or with parents?

Other Important Questions to ask:

- Who will be the coach of my team and what are their credentials and experience? *One of the most important elements of club volleyball is the nature and quality of the coaching your child will receive.*
- How many players will be on the team, what spots have been filled and how many are available?
- How does the selection process work? How will I be notified?
- How long is the spot held and when do I have to make a decision? (By GEVA policy you always have at least 72 hours to accept an offer. Please refer to the GEVA Recruiting and Commitment Policy for more information.)
- What is the club or team policy on playing time? (equal, shared, performance only, play to win, etc.)
- Will players and/or parents be expected to participate in fundraising activities? If so get details on the financial commitment and time requirements.
- Are their written policies and procedures and is there a process to address and escalate complaints?

Parents should also consider the goal of your child's experience playing club volleyball. Are they playing for health and recreation, more experience for high school play or possibly a college scholarship? A majority of college coaches search for prospective players at major national tournaments. Events such as multi regional tournaments, national qualifiers and the Junior National Championships attract the most college coaches. If this is what you want make sure the prospective club attends these events.

As a parent of a volleyball player you have a shared responsibility with the player and club. Other than providing financial support you may be called on to be a team parent or chaperone or to assist with transportation of teammates. You will also help by showing and encouraging good sportsmanship and responsible behavior. Parents should be careful of behaviors that are detrimental to the team. Look at the entire team, not just your player.

Clubs are obligated to deliver what they promise and treat players and parents with dignity and respect. They must help ensure that the adults involved with your child are positive role models. Please keep in mind that clubs are independent businesses and need to balance their needs with the needs of all other club members. There is no one type of club that is appropriate for everyone and you should feel confident that you will find an appropriate match for your player. Do not get pressured into making a hasty decision - talk to other clubs and parents. View each club's offerings as a product; shop for what you and your family want.

USA Volleyball prohibits player transfers from club to club, which is necessary to protect players, their teammates, and their clubs. In choosing a club, carefully consider your goals with potential clubs' emphasis on elite teams versus developmental, teams offered, cost, practice quantity and quality, number of coaches and their qualifications, distance to tournaments, length of the season, playing time, and tournament schedule.

Most clubs will require that you sign a contract. The contract may be a legally binding agreement between the club and you, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a junior player. Read and understand what you are committing before signing! Please be aware that what GEVA regards as a *binding commitment* is completely separate from any legal contract or agreement which you sign with a club. See the GEVA Recruiting and Commitment Policy for more information.

IN CONCLUSION

Choosing a club is serious business; a bad decision can make for a very long season. A little time researching your options and opportunities may lead to a more rewarding club volleyball experience. Remember to review the GEVA Recruiting and Commitment Policy and be sure to ask a lot of questions. If a club operates outside these guidelines or is hesitant to answer these questions or provide written policies it is probably best to move on. Remember volleyball is supposed to be FUN!

Please report all suspected violations of any USAV or GEVA policy on the GEVA Incident Report.

I have read and understand the GEVA Parents' Guide to Club Volleyball:

Player _____

Club/Team _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

(Clubs must keep this on file during the Contract Season and make it available in case of a dispute.)