



Starting a Junior Volleyball Program

Starting a junior volleyball program can be both a rewarding and a frustrating experience. The sources of the rewards are rather apparent – the opportunity to see those young people grow and develop, the excitement of athletic competition, and the joy of a job well done.

The challenges, on the other hand, can mostly be avoided by careful preseason planning which must then be carried out throughout the entire year. Most of the frustrations arise not out of the players or the coaches, but the administrative details. Once you have decided to start a program, you must keep in mind

Three initial hurdles:

Where Will You Practice?

The number of courts you will need will depend upon the number of teams operating in your program. Most coaches want at least one court per team for a practice. In addition, you will have to consider the number of hours you plan to practice. For example, practice times could vary from one evening per week to four times per week during the school year.

Sites for practices are limited only by the gym space available in your community. The site must have a properly sized and lined volleyball court and safe equipment. Places to begin looking include the local YMCA, schools, churches and recreational centers.

Who Will Coach?

The selection of the coach (es) is one of the most critical decisions you will make in initiating a Junior Volleyball program. Coaches form the basis for the entire program. The coach, if possible, should have some experience in either coaching or at least playing volleyball. All coaches should be willing to learn! Have a coaching philosophy for your club. The coach should also understand the basics of first aid, because injuries do occur.

In searching for coaches, the most obvious place to start is with parents. However, parents frequently do not make the best coaches and conflicts can arise. Other places to look are at local colleges, both in terms of college coaches and players. High school coaches may also be available, although you and they need to be aware of any state high school rules limiting the activities of high school coaches. Remember if you are on the border of other states around Kentucky you must abide by their state high school association rules also for any of the state players that are participating with your club. Adult players from your area may also provide you with a good source of coaches. Once you have selected the potential coaches, encourage them to improve their coaching skills. The basic coaches' clinic, called an IMPACT clinic, is required for all USAV coaches in the Region, and is offered free on-line to members of the Pioneer Region. Other coaching clinics are available on the USA Volleyball website and through the local high school federation. You are encouraged as a coach to attend as many clinics as possible to improve your coaching knowledge and abilities. All Coaches (head and assistants) participating in the USAV Junior program are required to hold an IMPACT or CAP Certification.

How Much Will It Cost?

One frequently made mistake is that the Junior Volleyball program is not treated as a business. Whether you like it or not, you are running a small business when you set up a Junior Volleyball program. Bills must be paid. The players have to either pay fees and/ or participate in fundraising activities. Separate checking accounts and closely detailed accounting should be kept. Programs should be incorporated to avoid tax problems. In terms of the costs of the



program, the cost per player can vary greatly from program to program depending upon the length of the season, the locations of competition, the amenities you offer the players and the amount of equipment you have to buy, and court rental fees. What are the payment options? Monthly, weekly. Check, credit card? Have a refund policy...we have learned from Covid-19. Starting a junior volleyball program can be both a rewarding and a frustrating experience. The sources of the rewards are rather apparent – the opportunity to see those young people grow and develop, the excitement of athletic competition, and the joy of a job well done.

The challenges, on the other hand, can mostly be avoided by careful preseason planning which must then be carried out throughout the entire year. Most of the frustrations arise not out of the players or the coaches, but the administrative details. As your group grows you may have other expenses i.e. Director's and Officer's insurance, bookkeeper and those families that do not pay at all. Once you have decided to start a program, you must keep in mind

Basic Expenses

There are three items that are certain to result in costs to the program:

- a. Each team must have identical uniforms – both shirts and shorts. When ordering uniforms, be sure to comply with the USAV uniform requirements, including the size and location of numbers on the front and back of jerseys. Numbers on the front of the shirt must be at least (4) inches high and at least (6) inches on the back. The numbers are centered and must be of contrasting colors to the shirt. The libero uniform must be contrasting to the other players uniforms on the court. Before you purchase the region will look at them to determine if they are legal if you have a question.
- b. Your team will have to be registered with the USAV through Pioneer Region. The cost of this Registration is established at the beginning of each year.
- c. All tournaments have entry fees, which are listed on the tournament schedule.

Other Possible Expenses

- a. You may choose to pay your coaches and/or cover their travel expenses. Gas/hotels.
- b. The practice gym may cost you money. If the facility you are using will charge you, this must be included in your initial budget.
- c. You may need to purchase some equipment such as first aid kits, volleyballs, carts, and volleyball bags.
- d. Extra player benefits. These can be expensive but give a separate identity to your program. You may want to include benefits to the players such as warm-ups, gym bags, knee pads or shoes.

Fundraising Ideas

As explained above, there are expenses involved with running a junior program. Here are a few Fundraising ideas to help you get started. You can be as creative as you want.

- a. Have a fund raiser (car wash, pancake breakfast, spaghetti dinner, sell coupon books, candy, etc.)
- b. Find a company to sponsor the team or several smaller merchants to contribute to the program. If you incorporate and apply for a non-profit organization status (these have fees associated with doing them), the donor's contributions may be tax-deductible.
- c. Offer to have concessions at some area sport tournaments or events (soda, sloppy joes, popcorn, candy, etc.).
- d. Host a tournament.



Basics for Forming a Junior Club in the Pioneer Region

For additional information go to the Handbook on the Pioneer Region website at www.pioneervb.com

1. A single team not affiliated with any other teams is a club.
2. Pick a club name that is not being used. Email to the region the online club registration form.
3. Decided how the team(s) will be formed, if: by invitation, tryouts for all positions, or tryouts for positions not filled by invitation.
4. Decide on how playing time will be worked out, i.e.: earned playing time, everyone plays some, but main goal is to when, or equal playing time.
5. Find a gym for practice time.
6. Get a coach. Remember that all adults affiliated with the team must be registered members and have a current background screening Safe Sport and if coaching IMPACT.
7. All coaches must have IMPACT coaches training. IMPACT is good for life once you have completed a class.
8. You must have at least 1 adult on each team registered as the Head Coach.
9. Decide on a club fee. Remember to budget for cost of uniforms, coaches, gym rental, number of tournaments, etc.
10. Uniforms must have a minimum contrasting 4" number center front, 6" number center back.
11. The colors of the uniforms and Libero jersey must contrast "Contrasting" means a light/dark contrast-- black/purple or navy/maroon would not work. Black and light pink would be a light/dark combo.
12. Players and coaches must register online and make their membership/background screening payment to the Pioneer Region before participation in any event. Plan on 2 weeks to get back the background screening to participate. (Usually takes 3-5 business days)
13. If needed, contact the region for an insurance certificate for you try-out or practice facility. The club Director must be a USAV member first
14. Have a simple contract with each participant's parent/legal guardian stating what you as a club are offering and how payment will be made.

Any questions contact the region – Nancy Funk NFunk@twc.com 502-239-1818

Selecting the Team

Tryouts

Once you have found your practice site, selected your coaches, and established a preliminary budget, you are ready to get started. If your team will be composed of players from your local high school or community, you may not want to have tryouts. However, if you are selecting players from various schools and communities, you may need to have tryouts.

The tryouts should be held on at least one day, and possibly two. Notices can be posted in the area schools and mailed to area coaches and players. Local recreational centers and YMCA and youth facilities may also allow you to post notices. The local media may provide some form of free advertisement for your tryouts. Tryout information may also be published on the Pioneer Region website, and on your own club web pages.

Once you have set the date and location, be prepared. Before you even set foot in the gym, know what evaluation tests you will have the players perform, what equipment you will need, how many helpers you will need, and how many evaluators you will use. You should also have some idea of the type of player you want in your program, because you will probably have more players at tryouts than you can accommodate in your program. In addition, plan to have a parent's meeting before or during the tryout to explain more about your club and what is expected. They will have questions about the costs and the commitment their child is making. Be prepared to answer those



questions. It is a good idea to have a rough season schedule already prepared to handout together with a rough preliminary budget. The better organized the tryout; the better your program will look to those who are thinking of getting involved.

Additional Steps

Once you have selected your team:

- a. First, how are you going to get the parents involved? Some junior programs have formal parent organizations or have parents involved in the organization on a Board of Directors basis. Others have very limited direct parent involvement. Some form of parent organization seems to provide a way to avoid the conflicts that will inevitably arise.
- b. Second, once all of this is accomplished, you can begin to complete the player registration process by contacting the Pioneer Region Volleyball registrar, Nancy Funk at NFunk@twc.com

Choosing Where to Play

Most areas have three basic types of tournaments. Check the Pioneer Region web site under the Tournament Schedule for a list of tournaments.

- a. League formats are generally about half-day events with no playoffs.
- b. Regular one-day tournaments generally consist of pool play followed by playoffs.
- c. Multiple-day events generally consist of two to three days of pool play and playoffs.

Some also offer Open and Club (or other level) events. As a new club you usually want to register in a Club event to start. Open are the very elite teams.

Coaches, and club directors, must read and sign the Coaches Code of Ethics when they register online. By forming a junior volleyball program, you have started down a long and rewarding path. The Pioneer Region will provide support and assistance. Good luck and have fun. For additional information and assistance contact:

Nancy Funk, Nfunk@twc.com or call 502-239-1818.