



## *A Parent's Guide to Choosing a Volleyball Club*

Choosing a volleyball club is a difficult decision and requires a serious time and financial commitment. This guide is intended to help the volleyball family make an educated decision about a rather large investment in time and money.

Aside from the obvious benefits of learning and improving volleyball skills and playing the game, club ball provides a broad educational experience. It enhances athletic, social, and leadership skills. One of the best ancillary benefits of club volleyball is making new friends from new schools and new places. Since players regularly officiate matches when they are not playing, leadership skills and knowledge of the game is also enhanced. Many players from various clubs have gone on to play volleyball in college; a few are on full scholarships. Some have gone on to coach high school or college or returned to coach club volleyball. Unfortunately, most will discontinue playing once they graduate high school. The commitment required for volleyball at the college level is usually more than most players care to undertake.

Some teams will play tournaments only in town, usually within a two hour drive of your home location, these are Regional Teams. Other teams will travel to various tournaments throughout the country and compete in two or three day tournaments, these are National Teams. While there is no guarantee your son or daughter will ever be seen by a college coach, there is a much better chance they will be seen if they play volleyball at the National level. A majority of college coaches search for prospective players at National Junior Olympic tournaments. Events such as National qualifiers and the Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships attract the most college coaches.

Club volleyball is a **BIG** commitment! The season runs from November to April for Regional Teams and as long as July for National Teams who attend the Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships. The cost for Regional Teams can run as low as \$350 per season to a high of \$1000. National Teams can incur from \$3000 to more than \$5000 in seasonal costs, depending on the level of competition and the number and locations of the tournaments. Parent's travel expenses are in addition to the regular club costs.

When comparing costs between clubs, be sure to consider what each club includes and what is NOT covered. The most important element is the kind of coaching you will be getting for your investment. The parent should also consider what the purpose of sending your child to a club: recreation, more experience for high school play or possibly a college scholarship. Most clubs will practice and play at a level above the Recreation level; this is usually found in church and city leagues. Regional Team level clubs will normally practice twice a week for a combined time of 3 to 3½ hours per week. National Teams may

practice more frequently and at a higher level. Regional tournaments will last one full day, Out-of-Region tournaments may last one or two days and National tournaments up to four days.

As in any sport, coaches at each club have a wide range of coaching experience and abilities, from very successful high school and college level coaches to those with little experience. Coaching abilities are normally dedicated to the age appropriate teams in need of a certain level of coaching skill. Younger players may receive coaches less experienced in volleyball, but competent in teaching basic fundamentals. Older age players require a more experienced coaching staff with a more aggressive style of training.

Consider the MOST important factors when choosing a JO club...what do you want from the club and what are the realistic expectations of your player? Many times these two issues become confused and a parent's expectation from the club and their player are not realistic expectations. As a club, we can provide time, space, training and the desire to make your child a better volleyball player. To be successful, your child has to share the same desire, and a willingness to follow her coach's instruction. If the desire only comes from the parent for their child to become a better player, NO coach or club can fulfill that hope.

Consider carefully and discuss the commitment required to participate for the whole JO season. Volleyball is a sport whose success is determined by the dynamics of the team and what EACH player contributes on the court during every point. The dynamics of a team depend on your attendance to practices and tournaments.

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