



From the Referees' Chair

Brian Hemelgarn

Well, it's here again, and we're into full swing for the 2003-04 season already!

Firstly, we made it through the clinic season in December and January, and I truly thank the folks who made that hap-

pen. Believe it or not, I missed being in Westerville in December, although Italy wasn't so bad! We also added a fourth regional clinic in Charleston, and that was very successful. They're really gung-ho to develop all aspects of volleyball in West Virginia: coaching, officiating and tournament directing.

Speaking of the various aspects of volleyball, my motto for this season is *Raise the Bar!* We're so large, with so many officials, players, coaches and administrators, that we need to step things up just a bit to continue providing consistency, outstanding service, and exciting events for everyone involved! As a region, we already have a very good cadre of officials, and our goal is to become an *elite* cadre of officials. Keep that in mind as you begin your season: "We are elite volleyball officials here in the OVR!"

We are adding to our family of elite officials; 54 new P1s have successfully passed their evaluations (Congrats!), and we still have nearly 30 more to train and evaluate at upcoming events. As for officials' training, in my *Raise the Bar* approach, I am restructuring both the clinic and rating/training programs for next season. Keep an eye out for more details in the future. I think you'll find these changes very agreeable!

Raise the Bar to refine your mechanics, rule knowledge and professionalism this year! Your uniform should be impeccable! Exhibit the highest level of professionalism at each and every match, both on and off the court. Be beyond reproach in your behavior. Perception is reality, and despite our intentions, others may not always view our actions in the way we intended. Hence, act in a way that won't call your integrity into question! Remember, officials are in the unique position of representing the OVR board and staff at each tournament. Always take the high road, and your decisions and actions will be better for it.

Finally, the 2004 season will bring some excellent opportunities for everyone. I plan to help each of you reach some of your officiating goals. Work hard, be prepared and have fun as we travel down this road together!

Modified Rules for Younger Juniors' Divisions

As a reminder/refreshers as we head into the season, there are a few modifications to the "standard" USAV playing rules for the younger age groups in juniors.

For 10s' and 12s' competition:

1. Net heights for 10s and 12s are 6'6" and 7', respectively.
2. They are allowed to use the "step in" rule for serving *only*. The service line for this age group is marked 2 meters inside the court from the back edge of the endline. (This line *must* be taped or drawn completely across the court.) Once the ball has been served, the regular endline is used during each rally.
3. These youngsters use the Molten® VB Lite™, which is a lighter ball than the Super Touch™.

For 13s' and 14s' competition:

1. Remember that the "re-serve rule" is in effect. That means during *each* service attempt, s/he may also have *one* re-serve. In order to be granted a re-serve after the first toss for service, the player *must* allow the ball to drop to the floor untouched. If the player catches the ball or if it hits her/him, the serve is ruled illegal, and a loss of rally is awarded to the opponent.
2. Also, with the re-serve rule, *each* attempt is allowed 5 seconds. There is no 8-second rule for service contact at this age level.

— Brian Hemelgarn