

The Juniors' Page

Bill Zehler, Juniors' Program Director

Once again, the Ohio Valley Region has shattered every record we have established in the area of Junior participation. We had over 10,000 registered girls the past season. Over 700 teams participated in our Junior Championships. There were over 40 teams (including National 16 Open Champion Team Z!) representing the OVR at the 2002 USA Volleyball Junior National Championships in Salt Lake City. Several more participated in the Girls' Invitational Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky. We also had over 20 boys' teams make the trek to Louisville for the Boy's Junior National Championships.

The tryout season for Juniors' clubs is now upon us. Athletes (and their parents) are making every effort to make the club that is the best fit. Clubs are trying to attract the best athletes to form the best teams possible. We hope this is a positive experience for everyone involved. Families are cautioned to do their homework when looking for a club. We ask club directors to use common sense when trying to attract athletes to their organizations.

The first day clubs may host tryouts for athletes in grades 9-12 is the day *after* the state volleyball championships in their state. Tryouts for athletes in grade 8 or younger may be held no earlier than the last Sunday in October (provided the middle school season is over in your area). State high school athletic association regulations mandate that athletes from member schools may not try out for off-season teams while their high school and middle school teams are still involved in competition. Failure to adhere to these dates may jeopardize the eligibility of the athletes we are trying to serve. Please make sure your season is over before attending a tryout.

There will be a new document we will ask club directors to have available at their tryouts. It will be known as the *Athlete's Bill of Rights*. This document will spell out all procedures for participating in a tryout. It will also inform the athlete and their parents of the rights of the clubs whose tryouts they are attending. We hope to avoid any unpleasant experiences by making this information available during the tryout sessions.



Tryouts may be of two types: open to anyone, and by invitation only. Each club must act responsibly when trying to attract athletes to their tryouts. Clubs may advertise through the media and distribute information regarding their tryouts to the coaches of the schools in their area at any time. It will be considered inappropriate for any member of a club (director, coach, or athlete) to try to recruit a member of another club. Clubs may respond to anyone interested in trying out for their program.

There are many types of tryouts. Some clubs have mandatory meetings the athletes and parents *must* attend before tryouts. Some offer a clinic and give each athlete a T-shirt for participating. Others simply do physical and skills tests and evaluate athletes based on a 2-3 hour session. Some bring athletes in for more than one session. Clubs are urged to give value for the dollar in the fees they assess. *The consumer is advised to know what they are receiving for the fees they are charged!*

The Ohio Valley Region provides secondary tryout insurance for all clubs that register their tryouts with the region. *Clinics and open gyms are not covered by this insurance.* Clubs offering these events are advised that they may not be a mandatory part of their tryout procedure. You must provide your own insurance coverage for these events. Clubs need to register their tryouts with the region. The recommended cost of tryouts is \$10.00. Permission is granted to charge more when proof of expense or value is documented.

Clubs may offer contracts to athletes at the end of their tryout sessions. The parents of an athlete *may* sign a contract as soon as it is offered if they wish. Clubs may not require a commitment on-site. The parents of an athlete invited to join a club *must* be given a period of no fewer than 10 days from the date of the tryouts to sign a contract with the club.

All club directors and coaches conducting tryouts must be registered members of USA Volleyball. We strongly recommend registering anyone working at your tryouts to cover

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personal liability for injury of an athlete. Failure to obtain insurance for unsanctioned events will result in all responsibility for injury being placed on the club. The OVR accepts *no* responsibility for claims against directors or coaches who are not registered members of this region.

There will not be any increase in fees for the 2003 season. The cost of registration and entering region-sponsored tournaments will remain the same as last season. There is a possibility that the USA Volleyball Regional Operating Division (ROD) *may* mandate background checks for *every* person involved in Junior volleyball. The cost of this policy would be \$15-\$25 for every adult member of each organization. We won't know the outcome of this potential policy until the ROD meeting in October. I am informing club directors now of the possibility that this may happen so they can budget for it.

Several educational programs will be offered to club directors and coaches. All club directors must complete the ASEP Sports Club Director course. This course will be offered in the region on December 7, 2002. There will be several sites available to attend the IMPACT course. The USA Volleyball CAP I and II coaching courses will also be offered in early January. Check the OVR website (www.ovr.org/juniors/coaching) for sites and dates.

Our regional High Performance Program was very successful this summer. Our Junior team finished second to the USA Junior National team, and our Youth team finished fourth in Park City, Utah (see cover article and the HP section of our website).

Have a *great* season!

Look for updated information on the Juniors' Page online:

www.ovr.org/juniors/



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