

Referees,

I want to provide you with the latest recap of our upcoming season:

As of 9/24, the Ohio governor removed the "one game per team per day" limitation for sports competition. This is great news for us for obvious reasons. We have not been notified that there is a limit to the number of games/matches/contests per team per day, so the door may be open for a familiar-looking tournament format. Maybe three-team pools instead of four, or maybe a wave format and slightly longer days, but there IS going to be some volleyball!

Competitions. A tentative tournament schedule is now posted on the OVR website (<https://www.ovr.org/juniors/tournaments.php>). Although dates are listed, rushing to fill your schedule is futile at this point -- there are still too many unknowns. Teams haven't even registered yet -- they can't form until after state HS championships in Nov.

Assigning for OVR/GCCC events. Please do not send requests to work OVR events yet. I'm not ready for that at all. I'll send an email when the time comes. Right now, it's more important that the OVR finalize our tournament format(s), match protocols, and event coordination. It's a lot of work, one step at a time.

First event. The Boys Holiday Tournament at the Greater Columbus Convention Center is first weekend of Dec. Our focus is on that event -- we absolutely MUST do things right to ensure our season can go forward unfettered.

Match Protocols. Brian Saterfield and Josh Hall have been preparing match protocols (i.e., how refs will run a match considering all the safety guidelines we need to follow). We've also been developing a GCCC event plan (health/temp checks, spectator limitations, team rosters, physical distancing, court layouts, lodging, etc.). My THANKS to both of them and Ron Wyzynski. They're working to make sure things go right.

Team Tryouts. The OVR Board & staff have been working with club directors to develop tryout formats that comply with health regulations and guidelines. Tryouts don't start for a couple of weeks, but the good news is that there appear to be a lot of kids interested in playing! OVR Commissioner Bob Price is active with the Ohio governor's Sports Task Force, and he stays in communication with PA and WV authorities, so the sport of volleyball has a voice as policies are being developed. Thanks to Bob for his efforts throughout the pandemic!

Winter/Spring volleyball. With USAV, women's & men's NCAA, and boys' high school all tentatively scheduled from January through May, referees are going to be pulled in different directions by assigning entities. All I can say at this point is do what's right for you! As a working referee, I understand. If you have to choose a collegiate match closer to home on a Saturday instead of a USAV juniors' tourney two hours away, I get it. I'm partial to the OVR but I also realize our sport extends beyond USAV. We're going to need to work together to make sure ALL the events have the officiating resources they need. We must be ready to step up because the sport is counting on us.

Technology. Chris Bielby and Al Herbert have spent countless hours

working with USAV membership services as we transition to a new member management system (MMS), i.e., SportsEngine. All of you got a look at the new system when you registered for this season. The USAV Academy with all its online training modules is also going to look different. It's a work-in-progress for everyone, and there are glitches. Be patient as things get worked out.

As you can see, there are lots of challenges ahead, but I know we're going to get through this! Looking forward to working with all of you as we navigate this ever-changing landscape. Again, our mantra is: be patient, flexible and understanding!

Take care - wear your mask - wash your hands - be kind out there!

Best,

Brian