



# Family Guide to Club Volleyball

**2023-2024 Season**

**As of July 1, 2023**

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## **Welcome**

The Keystone Region Volleyball Association (KRVA) is one of 40 regions of USA Volleyball, representing players, coaches, officials and other volleyball enthusiasts in the state of Pennsylvania. There are more than 75 [clubs](#) to choose from in Keystone Region for the 2023-2024 season.

We are constantly striving to make each club volleyball season better and help our parents and players understand what club volleyball is all about.

## **What is Club Volleyball?**

Club volleyball is an opportunity to play volleyball outside of high school or middle school-sponsored activities. Families pay to join a volleyball club that arranges for team practices, coaches, uniforms, insurance, and other items, and also for tournaments that the team will play in, competing against other clubs. A club may have one total team or many, and may have one team per age level, or multiple.

Club volleyball begins in either October for players 14 and under, or at the completion of the high school volleyball season in November for those 15 and over, and continues through the USA Volleyball Girls' and Boys' Junior National Championships at the end of June or beginning of July. Players from all over the state try out for different clubs as a way to continue playing volleyball year-round.

A tryout is an assessment of the athlete's ability and skill level, how well an athlete learns from instruction, and how well they play with others. Each club determines its own teams and members as well as tournament and travel schedule; some travel a great deal while others stay more local.

USA Volleyball is the National Governing Body (NGB) for volleyball for the United States and has 40 independently run regions throughout the country. As a Region of USA Volleyball, Keystone Region is the umbrella organization of the clubs in Pennsylvania and operates as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Keystone Region sets policy, implements USAV and independent education programs, provides insurance and operates various tournaments and championships. The clubs themselves are also independent business organizations, implementing their own policies and are in charge of their own finances. When a player becomes a member of a Keystone Region-sanctioned club, they also become a member of Keystone Region and USA Volleyball.

## **SafeSport and Coaching Requirements**

We all have a role to play in providing a healthy setting for volleyball, mentally, physically, and emotionally. The USA Volleyball SafeSport Program raises awareness about possible misconduct in our sport. Learn more at our [Keystone Region SafeSport page](#).

We're proud to say that every adult in USA Volleyball who will be working with a junior volleyball player (defined as a player 18 or under) is required to pass a very strict background screen every two seasons. This includes club directors, tournament directors, coaches and officials. In addition, every coach is required to complete a coaching clinic called ImPACT, which is at least four hours of online or in-person training.

If you have any concerns about how your child, or another child, is being treated, contact your club director immediately, and then contact the Keystone Region office. Addressing a situation swiftly is the best course of action.

## **New Members To USA Volleyball**

A brand-new player is defined as a person who has never participated in USA Volleyball before. If you have attended a tryout, clinic or other event in the past, you would be considered a “Returning Member”.

Selecting a club is a family decision and takes some research. Although our clubs must abide by general Keystone Region and USA Volleyball rules, each club is different in the way they run their organization and train their athletes.

### **Tips On Selecting A Club**

- What is the club philosophy? To win? To improve? To have fun?
- How many teams do you have at each age level?
- Who are the coaches at my age level?
- What is their background in coaching?
- How is playing time allocated?
- What are your club dues? Is there a payment schedule?
- What is covered/not covered in that fee?
- Are there any other financial obligations? Travel? Fundraising? Uniforms?
- Where, when and how often do you practice?
- Are practices mandatory? What if my child misses a practice? Misses a tournament?
- Are players allowed to play other sports during the club volleyball season?
- How long is your season?
- How far will the team be traveling?
- What does my child want to get out of the club experience?
- Can we afford the program we choose?
- How many players are on the Team?
- What is the method of communication between players and coaches, and between club/coaches and parents?

Spending time researching your options will help you have the best season possible.

## **Member Registration**

Before you can step on the court for any tryout or practice, you must become a member of Keystone Region/USAV. Your membership covers the insurance, among other things, for sanctioned tryouts, practices and events. The registration system that Keystone Region/USA Volleyball uses is called SportsEngine.

Please follow these steps to complete your registration:

1. Go to [www.KRVA.org](http://www.KRVA.org)
2. Click the “Register as a Keystone Region Member” at the top of home page
3. Click the blue button “Athlete/Parent”
4. Follow Step One to Purchase an athlete tryout member
5. KRVA/USA Volleyball Membership is non-refundable.

Once selected for a team, you will need to “upgrade” your child’s membership to a National or Premier membership before any further participation is allowed. You’ve already paid \$15 to try out, now you’re just paying the difference for the full junior membership, which is \$60 . This step affiliates and TIES you to a club program for the year. Clubs will be submitting their rosters to the KRVA Office. You will be receiving an email from your club director or club admin who will provide you a link to purchase your full membership and club assignment.

If your child is not selected for a team, please visit our homepage on [www.KRVA.org](http://www.KRVA.org), where we will post clubs looking

for players to fill their rosters.

## **Tryouts**

While the Keystone Region sets an allowable start date for tryouts, each club selects their own tryout schedule. We encourage you to contact each club directly to determine how their tryout process will work. Please see below for the [Keystone Region Tryout & Offers Policy and Dates](#).

Athletes may try out for as many clubs as they would like during the tryout period. Some tryouts will overlap, so it is up to you and your child to determine which they would like to attend and schedule as such. Please Remember, if a Early Re-Signing Offer was accepted, then your child is bound to that club and may not attend tryouts for a different club. Sanctions will be imposed if an athlete goes to another clubs tryouts

### **2023 Summer Tryout Periods**

**Junior Boys** - First available date clubs can hold tryouts: July 21st

**Junior Girls 15 & Older** - First available period clubs can hold tryouts: July 21st to July 30th. No tryouts may occur between August 1st and November 10th

### **2023 Fall Tryout Periods**

**Junior Girls 14 & Under** - First available date clubs can hold tryouts: Friday October 20th

**Junior Girls 15 & Older** - Clubs can hold tryouts: Friday November 10th

Please remember that if a club hands you an offer letter/contract at tryouts or verbally offers a position for you child it is invalid. The only offers that are valid and binding are written offers emailed to the family of the player with **offers@krva.org CC'd on the email** and they must be sent during the correct dates and times. Any offer before or after that is invalid. A club is allowed to let you know an offer will be extended to your daughter and what the offer will include, but it must be in writing as stated above. No matter what time of the year it is, a verbal offer is NOT BINDING, and an offer not sent via email with offers@krva.org CC'd is not considered binding. Clubs may promise to send an offer or give a position on a team verbally, but until it is in writing on the offer letter it is not binding.

## **Regular Season Offers**

Regular offers for Junior Boys may be emailed on July 21<sup>st</sup>. All offers made after July 21st are at the discretion of the club. Summer Offers for Junior Girls 15 & Older may be emailed out Wednesday at 7pm on July 26th to August 5<sup>th</sup>. No offers can be emailed between August 6th and November 14th. Fall offers for Junior Girls 14 & under may be emailed out on Wednesday October 25th @ 7 PM. All offers made after 7:01 pm October 25th are at the discretion of the club. Fall Offers for Junior Girls 15 & Older may be Emailed out on Wednesday November 15th @ 7 PM. All offers made after 7:01 pm November 15th are at the discretion of the club

Offers that are valid and binding are written offers emailed to the family of the player with offers@krva.org CC'd on the email and they must be sent during the correct dates and times. Players have 48 hours from the time stamp on the offer email to accept or decline the offer in writing. Families are encouraged to let clubs know of your intentions as soon as the decision has been made – you do NOT need to wait until the deadline to accept or decline an offer.

Once a player accepts in writing via the email offer CC'd to offers@krva.org, then the agreement is binding for both parties. Once you accept an offer, you cannot change your mind and join another club. You have made a season-long commitment to that club. Clubs are under no obligation to release players until their season is finished.

Offers not accepted or declined within the allotted time will be automatically rescinded when 48 hours is over according to the time stamp on the original offer email. Once an offer is declined in writing, the offer is off of the table. If the player changes her mind, the parents need to contact the club. If the club wants to reissue a new offer. Any offer before the specified dates and times above is invalid. A club is allowed to let you know an offer will be

extended to your daughter and what the offer will include, but it must be in writing as stated above

## **Keystone Region Recruiting Policy**

The Keystone Region has a policy regarding when and how clubs can contact junior players and their families. These rules are designed to protect the interests of the player and or/family regarding club contact, and allow players and families to seek information they want from clubs.

There are in-season and off-season definitions and guidelines, as well as what to do if you or your child are receiving unwanted contact from a club. [Please click here for a PDF copy of the Recruiting Policy.](#)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### How can I best prepare my child for tryouts?

Tryouts can be a very stressful experience as dozens of players may be trying out for teams of 10-12. Our best advice is to have your child well fed and rested before tryouts begin. Also, have a back-up plan in case they are not selected to their first choice. After tryouts, many clubs are still seeking players. Check our website for additional opportunities. Focus on a positive attitude and having fun at tryouts. Coaches and clubs are not only filling a team for skill, but attitude and hard work. While one player, in your eyes, may be a better skilled player, another player may bring more positive intangibles.

### Once my child chooses a club, can he/she change her mind and join another club?

No, they have made a season- long commitment to that club. Clubs are under no obligation to release players until their season is finished. Please refer to the Full Player Release Policy in the [KRVA Junior Operating Codes](#). The procedure outlined in the Junior Operating Codes must be followed and [registration@krva.org](mailto:registration@krva.org) must be included in all communications.

### What happens if my child gets injured at practice or at a tournament?

The coach will report the injury immediately to the club or tournament director and seek medical attention if warranted. The director, along with the coach and parent or guardian, will complete an incident report form, which will then be submitted to the Keystone Region office. The Keystone Region office will verify membership of the player and also the sanction of the event, and submit to the insurance company. If you (the family) choose to file a claim for the secondary insurance, you can download the paperwork from the [Keystone Region website forms page](#) and follow the instructions to submit the claim.

### I can't print out my membership card yet?

You will receive an email confirmation when you purchase a Keystone Region/USA Volleyball membership. On that email is a copy of your member card that you can print. It also includes a QR code that takes you to your profile in Sports Engine. All of these things can be printed when on your screen. [How to access Digital Membership Card](#)

### Can my child "play up" in an older age division?

Yes, if your child is selected to play on an older team, then he/she can "play up." All rules and regulation of the team age level (ball used, net height) will be followed, regardless of the age of the players.

### Why does my child have to keep score and line judge?

USA Volleyball believes in teaching players the entire game and that includes officiating. When they are not playing, players will develop leadership skills and knowledge of the game when they assist in officiating. Prior to any competition, clubs are required to instruct their players on proper techniques in refereeing and scoring.

### What are USA Volleyball Age Definitions?

Within the Keystone, teams are classified as National or Premier. National teams must use the “traditional” USAV age definitions. Premier teams may classify themselves based on the KRVA “grade-level” age definitions, subject to the KRVA Grade Level Waiver Policy.

Once a player participates (including but not limited to practicing, training, attending workouts and/or competing) in a club or varsity program for any university, college, community college, or junior college, he/she is ineligible to take part in any regional and national programming, which includes but is not limited to national JNC qualifying and championship events.

### [Player Age Classification Chart](#)

#### What happens if I don't pay my child's club dues?

The payment circumstances are between the club and the family, the Region does not get involved in financial disputes. We encourage both clubs and families to get everything in writing, and discuss issues as soon as possible.

### **Once The Season Gets Under Way**

You will more than likely be responsible to get your child to and from practices and tournaments, and being on time, or early, is important. Club coaches are responsible for the care and safety of your child until you arrive to pick them up. Most clubs also rent practice space, so if you're late, they may be obligated to pay for an additional hour of facility rent.

Encourage your child to speak to their coach if they're concerned about practice drills, skills and/or playing time. Almost all coaches want to speak directly with the player about playing time, not the parent. It is better to address questions or concerns early before they potentially spiral out of control.

Find like-minded parents to car pool with and arrange for travel on the road. Club volleyball becomes less expensive and more fun when families share travel expenses and experiences.

### **First Aid**

Not all practices or tournaments will have a certified athletic trainer available. Many club coaches will carry a team first aid kit, but it's a good idea to have your own, just in case. Some suggested items: Band Aids, athletic tape and pre-wrap (in case of ankle sprains), antiseptic wipes/ spray, cold packs, elastic bandages (to wrap ice on sprains), blister pads, pain relief (Advil, Aleve, etc.), large Ziploc bag to hold ice, lip balm and hand sanitizer.

### **Where And When Is The Team Playing?**

In Keystone Region, tournament directors are directed to have the tournament schedule available the Wednesday prior to the event. There are a lot of moving pieces to running a tournament, including reformatting the event when a team drops, which changes everything. Most tournament directors will either send out an email to the club/coach or post the schedule (or a link to the schedule) on their website. Please do not question the tournament director. Your coach should provide you with the information, or take the lead in getting it. Most likely, play will start at 8 a.m., so be prepared to be on-site by 7 a.m., and prepare to stay for most of the day.

Many parents enjoy volleyball weekends and like to treat volleyball tournaments like a tailgate. We all love tailgates, but remember **no alcohol** should be brought to junior volleyball events. Each facility has a specific food and drink policy. An easy rule of thumb: **Water only in the gym**. If someone from the facility or tournament staff asks you to remove some items from the gym, please do so immediately, or you will risk being removed from the event or having the police called.

Violations of the food and drink policies can lead to penalties for teams (even if parents or fans are the violators).

Not knowing the rules is not an excuse for breaking them.

## **Professional Referees and Scorers**

Keystone Region always welcomes individuals who are interested in becoming a professional (paid) referee or scorer.

[Please click here for more information.](#)

**\*\*Please note\*\*** that the work crews (the team line judging and working the score table) are NOT professional officials, so treat them with the respect you would wish for your own child. Especially at the younger age groups, players are still learning how to perform the various tasks. We encourage parents to become trained in order to help out, or at least have knowledge of the rules. [Please click here for training materials for junior players.](#)

## **Keystone Region-Hosted Tournaments**

Event	Type	Divisions	Date	Location
<b>Pennsylvania Kick Starter</b>	Girls	12   14   16   18 Girls 18 Freedom Bid	January 13-14, 2024	BodyZone Reading, PA
<b>Pittsburgh Ice Breaker</b>	Girls	18 American 16 American 12 American	January 20, 2024	All American Fieldhouse Monroeville, PA
<b>Pittsburgh Ice Breaker</b>	Girls	15 American 14 American	January 21, 2024	All American Fieldhouse Monroeville, PA
<b>Queens of the Court</b>	Girls	12 Regional 13 Regional	January 27, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>Queens of the Court</b>	Girls	14 Regional 15 Regional 16 Regional 17 Regional 18 Regional	January 28, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>BANE Week #1</b>	Boys	14 OPEN   USA 15 OPEN   USA 16 OPEN   USA   Club	February 10-12, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>Frost Bite</b>	Girls	16 American 18 American	February 11, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>BANE Week #2</b>	Boys	17 OPEN   USA 18 OPEN   USA   Club	February 17-19, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>Capitol City Freeze</b>	Girls	18 National/American Bid 17 - 12 American	February 25-26, 2024	Spooky Nook Manheim, PA
<b>Lucky Charm Classic</b>	Girls	18-12 American 17-14 Freedom Bids	March 10-11, 2024	PA Farm Show Harrisburg, PA
<b>Champions Cup</b>	Girls	17-12 National/American Bid 18-12 CHAMP	March 24-25, 2024	PA Farm Show Harrisburg, PA

## **Club-Hosted Tournaments**

Many of our clubs elect to host their own tournaments. While Keystone Region sanctions (approves) these events,

the club manages these tournaments. There are different entities that run tournaments within Keystone Region, and our insurance coverage and other policies only apply to Keystone Region-sanctioned events. A list of these can be found on Advanced Event System

## **USA Volleyball**

Recognized by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) as the leader for the sport of volleyball in the United States, USA Volleyball provides a host of services and information, as well as a connection to our [National and Olympic Teams](#). There are different educational opportunities for [coaches](#) and [officials](#), [indoor](#) and [outdoor](#) championships and competitions as well as blogs and information on [grassroots volleyball](#) and how to "[Grow The Game](#)" from some of the best minds in the volleyball world.

## **Keystone Region/USA Volleyball Spectator/Parent Code of Conduct**

The [Keystone Region/USAV Spectator Code of Conduct](#) should be posted at every facility during a Keystone Region-sanctioned event. Please take a moment to read what is expected of you as a spectator, and the ramifications for unacceptable behavior.

I will:

- I will abide by the official rules of USA Volleyball.
- I will display good sportsmanship at all times.
- I will encourage my child and his/her team, regardless of the outcome on the court.
- I will educate myself on the unique rules of this facility.
- I will honor the rules of the host and the host facility.
- I will generate goodwill by being polite and respectful to those around me at this event.
- I will direct my child to speak directly with his/her coach when coaching decisions are made that may be confusing or unclear. I will redirect any negative comments from others to the respective event director or program administrator. I will direct all concerns regarding officials to the head coach or club director for my team/club as opposed to the head official directly.
- I will immediately notify the event director and/or program administrator in the event that I witness any illegal activity.
- I will support the policies and guidelines of the team/club that I represent.
- I will acknowledge effort and good performance, remembering that all of the players in this event are amateur athletes.
- I will model exemplary spectator behavior while attending this event.
- I will respect the history and tradition of the sport of volleyball by being a good ambassador.

I will not:

- I will not harass or intimidate the officials.
- I will not coach my child from the bleachers and/or sidelines
- I will not criticize my child's coach or his/her teammates.
- I will not participate in any game or game-like activities (including on-court ball shagging) unless I have a current membership card with USA Volleyball.
- I will not bring and/or carry any firearms at any region event.
- I will not bring, purchase or consume alcohol at any youth/junior volleyball event.

Event management may refuse admission to, or eject without refund, anyone who is deemed disorderly, or who fails to comply with these guidelines or any and all security measures and laws.

Spectators assume all risks incident to the game, or related events and activities, including the risk of lost, stolen or damaged property or personal injury.

## **In Closing**

Club volleyball can be the most fun parents and kids have together in middle and high school years, so focus on the road trips and time together, and watch your child become an athlete and a leader. It's their road, but you can enjoy the ride. We want your child to have a great experience this year, and hopefully continue to play the sport we all love for a lifetime.

If there is information that you feel would aid other parents in navigating the club volleyball world, please email the ideas to Michelle Carlton at [commissioner@krva.org](mailto:commissioner@krva.org)

For additional information, please visit our website, [www.KRVA.org](http://www.KRVA.org), and don't hesitate to [contact the Region Office](#) with questions!