



**USA**Volleyball

*Great Lakes Region*  
*Handbook*

Last Updated February 2023

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## Dedication

This Handbook is lovingly dedicated to Merton H. Kennedy. Mert guided and nurtured the Region through its infancy. Many of its programs, innovations, and achievements trace back to his ideas. For more information about Mert Kennedy and other pioneers of the Great Lakes Region, please check out Appendix VIII.

## Introduction

The Region Bylaws govern Region administration and activities and can be found on the Region web site under “Region Info” – “Publications” along with this Handbook and other Region documents and forms. Bylaw provisions supersede any conflicts with the contents of this Handbook. The Handbook is an informal guide intended to (i) assist players, coaches, parents, officials, and organizers and (ii) explain current Region policies, administration, personnel, and procedures. Please submit suggestions to improve the Handbook to any Officer, Staff member, or member of the Region Board of Directors.

### I. Mission and Goals.

A. Article II of the Great Lakes Regional Volleyball Association (“Great Lakes Region,” the “Region”) Bylaws describes the Region’s mission, purposes, and goals. The Region is a non-profit organization serving Northern Illinois created to (i) promote, develop, support, educate, and organize volleyball players from grassroots to National Team level; create volleyball learning, practicing, and competition opportunities; promote, educate, and support volleyball coaches, officials, organizers, and facility managers and (ii) serve as the Regional Volleyball Association of USA Volleyball (USAV), the National Governing Body for volleyball. The Region consists of Members who pay dues and participate in Region and USAV activities.

B. Non-Discrimination Policy. The Region is committed to creating an environment in which diverse individuals may participate in volleyball activities in an atmosphere of tolerance, support, civility, and respect for rights and sensitivities regardless of personal characteristics or beliefs. The Region is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment opportunities without regard to personal characteristics unrelated to ability or performance. The Region does not discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, skin pigment, disability, handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, gender, or sexual orientation. The Region supports the principal of broad opportunity as an essential element in the lives of students, officials, players, and coaches. Therefore, the Region will take proactive steps to support and extend these principles where such action might assist their positive expansion and help forestall decisions placing them in jeopardy.

C. Inherent Risk. Players of all ages and parents and guardians of Junior players must understand that the physical activity of volleyball involves an inherent risk of bodily injury, including paralysis, dismemberment, or death as well as loss or damage of property. There now also exists the risk of exposure to COVID 19 or other pathogens in any public place where other persons are present. COVID 19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. If you or a person in close personal contact have been exposed to another person

known to be infected with COVID 19 or a similar contagion, please advise the coach of your club and refrain from further participation in volleyball until you have obtained a test verifying you are free from infection. For the safety of its Members, the Region endeavors to follow CDC recommendations and mandates.

## II. Offices and Contact Information.

### A. Office.

The Region maintains an office at 745 McClintock Drive, Suite 314, Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527. The office telephone number is (630) 986-9000, and its e-mail address is [greatlakesvolleyball@glrvb.com](mailto:greatlakesvolleyball@glrvb.com). As a result of technology development and for health reasons, the Region office operates in part virtually as certain members of the Region staff can fulfill their responsibilities from home and via computer. Contact information for the Region Board, officers, and staff can be found below and on the Region web site <https://www.greatlakesvolleyball.org/wordpress/>

### B. Region Agent.

The Region has identified Peter D. Recchia as its Agent to accept service of summonses, complaints, and other legal documents on its behalf. Mr. Recchia has an office at 745 McClintock Drive, Suite 150, Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527. His telephone number is (708) 695-5300 and e-mail address is [infor@4wealthfg.com](mailto:infor@4wealthfg.com).

## III. Board of Directors.

### A. Board of Directors (“Board”)

Consisting of eleven (11) individuals with vote and four (4) Officers with voice but no vote (except the Commissioner empowered to cast a tie-breaking vote) governs the Region. Voting members of Board elect from among themselves a chair to administer meetings and serve as titular head of the Region. The Commissioner has primary oversight of Region Officers and staff, who manage the Region on a day-to-day basis, and therefore, often serves as the face or leader of the Region. In that capacity, the Commissioner historically has served as the Region’s primary liaison with USA Volleyball, although the Board Chair may assume some of that responsibility in the future.

The Board does not administer or manage the Region. The Board entrusts those daily responsibilities to Officers and staff who are Region employees. Rather, the Board (i) creates, revises, updates, and enforces policies and procedures and (ii) establishes plans, budgets, and goals to advance Region purposes and benefit its Members.

Voting members of the Board consist of representatives from the Region’s various constituencies and two (2) independent directors without a recent direct relationship to the Region. All Board members serve two (2) year terms. Terms are staggered to ensure some continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge. Some positions are elected, and some appointed as described below. All Board members (Representatives) except the two (2) independent directors who are appointed) shall be elected by no later than October 31 of the relevant election year. Current voting members

of the Region Board, their positions and terms, and contact information are listed on the Region web site under “Region Info”, and then “Staff.” For more information about Region Governance, including the Board of Directors and Staff, see Article V of the Region Bylaws.

B. Voting Members of the Board.

1. Girls’ Junior Representatives. As the majority of Region Members are Junior girls and individuals affiliated with their teams and clubs, there are four (4) Girls’ Junior Representatives to give that constituency more proportional voice. Two (2) Girls’ Junior Representatives are elected each year by individuals identified on their Region membership form as club directors. Each year, Junior club directors may vote for two (2) Girls’ Junior Representatives and one (1) Boys’ Junior Representative (three [3] votes). A Girls’ Junior Representative must be a current Girls’ Junior coach or club director and in “good standing”. Each of the six (6) Junior Representatives (Boys and Girls) must come from a different club. It is a Board goal that Junior Representatives represent a diverse cross section of the Membership, including large, medium-sized, and small clubs.
  - Terri Baranski- [terri@unovbc.com](mailto:terri@unovbc.com)
  - Ryan Summers - [diamond.elite@hotmail.com](mailto:diamond.elite@hotmail.com)
  - Sue Keck- [slecklions1@aol.com](mailto:slecklions1@aol.com)
  - Mary Soapes- [vbref42@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vbref42@sbcglobal.net)
2. Boys’ Junior Representatives. There are two (2) Boys’ Junior Representatives with one (1) elected each year by Junior club directors.
  - Tolis Koskinaris (Board Chair) - [tkkill@yahoo.com](mailto:tkkill@yahoo.com)
  - Miguel De La Rosa - [mdelarosa@skyhighvolleyball.org](mailto:mdelarosa@skyhighvolleyball.org)
3. Outdoor Representative. One (1) individual actively involved with outdoor volleyball shall be elected every other year as Outdoor Representative by Region Members who indicate affiliation with outdoor volleyball on their Region Membership form.
  - Lorelee Smith – [smithlo@lewisu.edu](mailto:smithlo@lewisu.edu)
4. Adult Representative. One (1) individual currently or recently active as an adult player or coach shall be elected every other year by Region Members indicating activity as an adult player or coach on their Region Membership forms.
  - Bob Jones - [volleyballbob8@gmail.com](mailto:volleyballbob8@gmail.com)
5. Officials’ Representative. One (1) individual with substantial experience officiating, training, mentoring, recruiting, assigning, and evaluating officials shall be elected every other year by Region Members indicating activity as an official on their Region Membership forms. The Officials’ Representative shall advocate for, and represent, officials in the establishment of Region policies, procedures, and budgets; she or he is different from the Officials’ Chair, who is an independent contractor paid by the Region to oversee training, developing, assigning, and evaluating officials.
  - Dean Hoskin - [dhoskin18@gmail.com](mailto:dhoskin18@gmail.com)
6. Independent Representatives. To help maintain objective, broad, and grounded perspectives in governing the Region, two (2) Independent Representatives serve on the Board. With input from the Board, the Commissioner and/or Board Chair nominates one (1) or more persons each year with no material relationship (coach, player, club director, officer, etc.) with the Region for at least the past two (2) years and meeting such other criteria for independence as specified by the Board to serve as an Independent Director.

The nominee receiving a majority of votes from the Board is elected each year (for the two-year term).

- Paul Ickes - [ickespaul9@gmail.com](mailto:ickespaul9@gmail.com)
- Patricia LoVerde - [t\\_sports\\_26@yahoo.com](mailto:t_sports_26@yahoo.com)

C. Officers (Non-Voting Members of the Board).

- Commissioner. For many years, the Commissioner was a volunteer position whose responsibilities included chairing the Region Board; oversight of Region employees and/or independent contractors; serving as liaison with USA Volleyball; strategic planning; and countless other jobs related to Region administration. As the Region grew in Membership, budget, and activities, responsibility for its administration necessitated the conversion of Region Officers to paid employees, the establishment of office staff positions, and the retention of independent contractors. As a consequence, the Commissioner became a hybrid position combining policy-making with day-to-day administration. To avoid inherent conflicts of interest, Region Officers serve on the Board with voice but no vote subject to the Commissioner's right to cast a tie-breaking vote. Although the Commissioner retains responsibility for Region staff, expanded staff has transitioned primary responsibility for daily oversight to the Director of Region Services. The Board recently revised the Region Bylaws to redirect Commissioner responsibility toward Membership growth, financial and sponsorship development, improvement and growth of services to Region Members, Membership diversity, representing the Region at USA Volleyball National meetings, serving as primary liaison with USA Volleyball, and strategic planning supplementary to the Board.
- Dan Ames- [daniel.ames@glrvb.com](mailto:daniel.ames@glrvb.com)
- 1. Director of Region Services. The Director of Region Services succeeded to many responsibilities formerly held by the Commissioner. She or he supervises and manages Region staff and ancillary independent contractors. She or he acts as the primary liaison between Region Members and Region staff, assists with budget preparation, prepares (or ensures the preparation of) reports for or requested by the Board, and generally has responsibility for the Region staff, including delegation or assignment of tasks and responsibilities. If both the Board Chair and Commissioner are unable to chair a Board meeting, the Director of Region Services will serve as Chair.
- Kim Greenback - [kim.greenback@glrvb.com](mailto:kim.greenback@glrvb.com)
- 2. Treasurer. The Treasurer has primary responsibility for Region financial matters, including the preparation of the Region budget and sub-budgets; oversight of Region investments, assets, and financial accounts; revenues and expenditures; financial reports; ensuring the preparation of accurate Region tax returns; assisting with audit of the Region finances and books by a certified public accountant; and chairmanship of the Region Finance Committee.
- Angelo Iasillo - [aiasillo@gmail.com](mailto:aiasillo@gmail.com)
- 3. Secretary. The Region Secretary has evolved to include responsibility for taking, disseminating, confirming, posting, and preservation of Board Minutes; ensuring timely notices for Board meetings; ensuring the preparation and circulation of Board agendas; and, in the absence of a Board designee, acting as Board parliamentarian. NOTE: Board Minutes are preserved on the Region website under Region Information, Publications, Minutes.
- Urim Demirovski - [Urim.Demirovski@glrvb.com](mailto:Urim.Demirovski@glrvb.com)

## IV. Region Staff.

In addition to non-voting positions on the Board, Region Officers have specific responsibilities as employees of the Region. Some staff members work in the Region office; others work remotely.

### A. Region Office Staff.

1. Coordinator of Region Services. The Coordinator of Region Services assists the Director of Region Services, other staff members, and other Region Officers in providing day-to-day services for Region Members, maintaining records, and assisting Board members in fulfilling their responsibilities.
  - Carla Zaber - Carla.Zaber@glrvb.com
2. Financial Manager (aka Manager of Finance). The Region Services Financial Manager assists the Treasurer in ensuring timely payment of Region obligations, maintaining Region financial records, receiving and recording Region dues and other receipts, preparing financial reports, assisting with audit of the Region books, and assisting other staff, Officers, and Board members as needed.
  - Charlie Spry- Charlie.Spry@glrvb.com
3. Manager of Finance/Tournament Director. The Manager of Finance/Tournament Director shall assist the Director of Region Services and Financial Manager in managing Region finances, budget, collections, and obligations.
  - Urim Demirovski - Urim.Demirovski@glrvb.com

### B. Independent Contractors Assisting Staff.

Region growth and diversity of its activities has compelled the Region to retain independent contractors to provide specific services for Region Members. Independent contractors are not Region employees. Independent contractors currently retained (or contemplated) by the Region include the following positions:

1. Officials' Chair. The Officials' Chair has primary responsibility for organizing clinics for officials; disseminating information about USAV rules and techniques to officials, players, and coaches; recruiting, mentoring, evaluating, and developing officials; assigning clinicians and raters to Region leagues and events; managing other Officials' Coordinators and Chairs; and such other responsibilities as advance the interests of Region officials.
  - Janice McGahey - mcgeary@gmail.com
2. Officials' Assignment Chair. Reporting to the Commissioner, the Officials' Assignment Chair has primary responsibility for assigning officials to Region tournaments, leagues, and events and to the Windy City Power League.
  - Krystian Krzyzak - krystiankrzyzak@gmail.com
3. Sand/Grass Coordinator. This individual helps to plan and organize outdoor (and any indoor) Region events on grass and sand.
  - Lorelee Smith - smithlo@lewisu.edu
4. Tournament Scheduler. The Tournament Scheduler is responsible for overseeing the organization of Region indoor tournaments, sanctioning Region tournaments, and otherwise assisting with Region events and competitions. Note that a separate committee organizes the Windy City Power League.
  - Tony LaRocca - tony@clubfusionvb.org

5. **Tournament Director.** The Tournament Director is responsible for overseeing the organization of Region indoor tournaments, assist in sanctioning Region tournaments, and otherwise assist with Region events and competitions.
  - Urim Demirovski - Urim.Demirovski@glrvb.com
6. **Region Webmaster.** The Webmaster has primary responsibility for maintaining, updating, and improving the Region's web site. The Webmaster is charged with making the Region's web site user friendly for Region Members.
  - Chris Rentz - crentz77@gmail.com
7. **Windy City National Qualifier Webmaster.** The WCNQ Webmaster has primary responsibility for maintaining, updating, and improving the Windy City National Qualifier web site.
  - Eric Schulze- eschulze@vcunited.club

## **V. Affiliation with USA Volleyball.**

USA Volleyball (USA V) is the national governing body for volleyball in the United States. The United States Olympic Committee identifies organizations to oversee sports in the United States that compete in World and Olympic Championships. USA Volleyball has delegated responsibility and authority to various Regional Volleyball Associations (RVAs) to represent it and act on its behalf throughout the United States. The RVAs, in turn, promote and support grassroots through elite levels of volleyball in the geographic areas they represent. The Great Lakes Region is the USA Volleyball RVA for Northern Illinois. For liability purposes, Members of the Great Lakes Region are not "members" of USA Volleyball; they are only Members of the Region. The Region, though, is a member organization of USA Volleyball, whose primary purpose is to achieve success at World and Olympic championships, in part through development of grassroots volleyball. Membership in the Region obtains certain benefits from USA Volleyball, listed below in Section VI.

Because of the vulnerability of young athletes to predatory coaches and other adults and to help ensure the safe conduct of volleyball events and activities sanctioned by RVAs, USA Volleyball has established certain codes and policies. USA Volleyball has required that Members of RVAs such as the Great Lakes Region must agree to, and comply with, USA Volleyball codes and policies. Those policies and codes include:

- A. The USA Volleyball Participant Code of Conduct (see Appendix III), which establishes basic rules for safety and reasonable conduct for participants in all volleyball activities.
- B. The USA Volleyball Coaches Code of Conduct (see Appendix III), which establishes stringent rules to reduce the risk that coaches will take advantage of, or harm, Youth and Junior athletes entrusted to their care.
- C. SafeSport policies and procedures (see Appendix VI), which provide a process and national organization through which reports of abuse, threats, or reasonably based beliefs that such harms have taken place can be reported anonymously and safely, investigated promptly, and addressed fully and objectively.
- D. USAV Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP).

## **VI. Activities and Benefits of Membership in the Region.**

Athletes, officials, coaches, and other persons pay a fee to become Members of the Great Lakes Region. Sometimes, there are questions about the benefits of Membership, especially as there now are other organizations offering volleyball memberships and competitions. Membership fees pay for the following activities and benefits, among others:

- A. Benefits through USA Volleyball including liability and secondary medical insurance for sanctioned events such as tryouts, practices, tournaments, and leagues; eligibility for Junior National, National, Olympic, and Developmental teams; national training opportunities as coaches, officials, and athletes; eligibility to compete in Junior and Open National Championships and qualifying tournaments; affiliation with the National Teams and their respective successes; SafeSport training and protections; representation on the USAV Board; and other benefits.
- B. Eligibility to compete in local USAV sanctioned indoor and outdoor tournaments, the Windy City Power League (see Article VII), the Windy City National Qualifier, and similar events.
- C. Management of the Windy City Power League receipts and expenditures.
- D. Eligibility to compete in events of other regional volleyball associations.
- E. Eligibility for the Region National Team Development Programs, including teams, training, and clinics.
- F. Coaching, officiating, and player skill education (including clinics and camps organized by the Region), publications, and on-line modules.
- G. Training (including clinics and rating sessions organized by the Region), evaluation, certification, and advancement as a coach.
- H. Training, evaluation, certification, and advancement as an official plus opportunities to officiate in the Region, USAV National events, and other regions for compensation.
  - 1. Discounted access to certain clinics and training opportunities.
  - 2. Access to USA Volleyball Rules, as modified from FIVB rules.
  - 3. Rule books are sent to club directors and certified officials.
- I. Access to the Region web site information, Region office staff support, and other sources of Region information or training.
- J. Access to weekly information from the AVCA, as well as discounted membership prices.
- K. Offers free premium memberships to the Art of Coaching online platform for first 112 eligible adult coaches each season.
- L. Eligibility to serve on the Region Board and committee of the Windy City Power League.
- M. Creation of SafeSport policies and Codes for coaches, officials, and other adults involved in volleyball to protect Junior and other vulnerable athletes under their care and influence.

## **VII. Membership fees, entry fees, charges, and good standing.**

### **A. Adult membership fees.**

The Region charges each adult Member an annual fee that covers or contributes to the cost of liability and secondary insurance through USA Volleyball, the review and

costs of sanctioning adult events and competitions, providing officials at Region adult events, eligibility to compete at National Championships and in other Regional Volleyball Associations, eligibility to coach or officiate, and contribution toward administration of the Region (web site, office, Board, training, etc.). This annual fee is reflected on the Region Membership application form.

**B. Junior membership fees.**

The Region charges each Junior Member an annual fee that covers or contributes to the cost of liability and secondary insurance through USA Volleyball, the review and costs of sanctioning Junior events and competitions (including in part the Windy City Power League, practices, tryouts, and tournaments), paying for officials at the Windy City Power League, organizing a Qualifier conveniently local to Region teams, and contribution toward administration of the Region (web site, office, Board, training, SafeSport oversight, etc.). This annual fee is reflected on the Region Membership application form. It does not include the cost of joining a particular club. Club memberships involve separate and private contracts over which the Region has no control absent violation of truth and recruiting policies.

**C. Volleykids.**

To provide insurance protection for a temporary period such as a camp, clinic, or other such short-term event, the Region created the Volleykids Membership category. Junior athletes who register under Volleykids receive limited membership benefits (insurance coverage for twenty-four (24) total hours of in-house, instruction-only activity). A Volleykids Membership term continues for the shorter of (i) twenty-four (24) hours of covered activity or (ii) three (3) months. Volleykids are not regular full Junior Members and, therefore, are not governed by Region recruiting policies.

**D. Sanction and Sanction Fees.**

To “sanction” an event means that the Region has approved its scheduling and organization; has ensured the event is covered by USA Volleyball liability insurance for which Certificates of Liability Insurance are available upon request often with the competition venue and/or its owner designated as an additional insured; generally, has deemed the event not to conflict harmfully with other Region-sanctioned events; and sometimes means the Region has assigned referees to the event. Some Regions charge a “Sanction Fee” to event organizers; the Great Lakes Region does not charge a sanction fee.

**E. Entry Fees.**

Organizers of private (club or team) events have freedom to determine what entry fee they will charge to cover costs such as facility, portable courts, net systems, balls, referees, security, sanction fees, and other expenses. A portion of an entry fee might also be fund raising for a particular team, charity, or club. To cover similar costs, the Region charges entry fees for tournaments and events it organizes. Region teams enjoy priority over non-Region teams for admission to Region events. Note that the Windy City National Qualifier is a national event organized by the Region subject to USAV requirements and charges. The Region organizes the Qualifier in substantial part to give Region teams a local opportunity to qualify for the Girls’ Junior National Championships. The Windy City Power League is a Region-sanctioned event or activity, but it is organized by the Windy City Power League Committee comprised

of club directors. The Winter Volleyball Championships is a sanctioned USA Bid tournament but is not a Region organized event.

**F. Refund policies – USA Volleyball.**

Upon receipt of a Membership application, the Region forwards a certain portion of the Membership fee to USA Volleyball to ensure immediate insurance coverage for all events and activities in which the Member participates and eligibility for National events. These fees are managed separately from the portion of the Membership fee the Region retains. A request for USA Volleyball registration cancellation and possible refund of fees must be submitted to the Region as soon as possible. Full memberships in the Region may be eligible for a refund of National registration fees if received within forty-five (45) days of registration. Registrations for limited membership in the Region are ineligible for refunds. USA Volleyball will only consider a refund if the Region provided a full refund of its portion of the Membership fee. If USA Volleyball deems a refund to be appropriate, the refund amount will be net of insurance and credit card processing fees. Because of the catastrophic financial effects of the national COVID shutdown of athletic activities, USA Volleyball has stated that no future refunds will be issued when a volleyball season or any portion thereof is canceled or interrupted for any reason. Specific USA Volleyball programs and events may have different cancellation policies. Such policies should be disclosed in the program or event manuals or entry forms.

**G. Refund policies – Region.**

The Region will not issue refunds, partial or otherwise, for any membership, clinic, seminar, or rating session more than thirty (30) days after payment is made. Refunds due to extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Background screening fees, once submitted for processing, are non-refundable. The Region has posted its tournament entry fee refund policy on AES. No refunds will be issued for entry fees if requested after the posted tournament closing date on AES. Some of these events include but are not limited to the Windy City Power League(s), Great Lakes Qualifier Services, and Adidas Windy City National Qualifier. Please note the closing date published in AES before registering for any tournament.

**H. Good standing.**

To participate in Region events and activities, a Member must be in “good standing.” The requirements for good standing vary with the category of activity, as follows:

1. Each Adult or Junior must be a current Member of the Great Lakes Region, with Membership fee paid in full, and without a Region or USAV “Hold” on her or his Membership or suspension of Membership privileges. “Holds” occur when a Member fails to pay dues to the Region or committed fees to USAV or has had Membership privileges suspended.
2. Each Adult whose volleyball activities will involve Junior players in any way (e.g., coaches, club directors, officials, athletic trainers, Board members, Region Officers, Region staff) must take and pass the online SafeSport training module. Note the NEW requirement by USAV that Junior Members attaining age eighteen (18) during a season must complete SafeSport training.
3. Each Adult whose volleyball activities will involve Junior players must undergo and pass the USAV Background Screening process.

4. Each Junior Club Director and Coach must take and pass IMPACT training or obtain other USAV required certifications.

## **VIII. Juniors.**

### **A. Competing in more than one (1) volleyball organization.**

For various reasons (cost savings, profit, bureaucracy, competition, and others), Junior teams and clubs sometimes join volleyball organizations other than USAV. Such other organizations include the Junior Volleyball Association (JVA) and Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). To maximize opportunities, some clubs and teams have registered with more than one volleyball organization. In the spirit of cooperation and to try to create a level playing field, Junior teams and clubs who join the Region and one or more other volleyball organization must abide by the most stringent policies and regulations of the organizations they join, including with particularity but not limitation player safety, recruiting, tryouts, open gyms, marketing, and related policies.

### **B. Age groups.**

USAV has established single-year Junior age groups from 18 and under (younger) down to 8 and younger, generally based on whether an athlete was born on or after July 1 of the relevant year. For obvious reasons, the “relevant year” for an age group advances one (1) year annually. To find current age definitions, go to <https://www.greatlakesvolleyball.org/wordpress/> under Indoor, and then click Junior forms, and look for “Age Definitions.” Because some athletes turn 19 during their senior year of high school, they are usually allowed to compete on 18 and younger Junior teams. In addition, as young athletes physically develop at different rates, there are exceptions established each year by USAV with respect to (i) boys and girls competing on the same teams and (ii) a young athlete who is developing later competing in a younger age group team than for which he or she otherwise would qualify. USAV allows 18-year-old athletes in their junior year of high school to compete on 17 and under teams. USAV age group waivers vary from year to year. The Region may also grant age group waivers on a case-by-case basis.

### **C. Region Age Group Waivers.**

With the exception of 19-year-old high school seniors, all Junior Member age groups are determined based on date of birth and not grade in school. Other than national waivers granted by USAV annually for certain age groups, the Region will grant age waivers only for exceptional circumstances. Ability and stature of a player are not considered. Parents of a player may request an age waiver by completing the Great Lakes Age Waiver Request Form on the Region website under Juniors and then Forms. The completed form must be provided to the player’s club director who then is responsible for submitting the request form to the Region at [age.waiver@glrvb.com](mailto:age.waiver@glrvb.com). Waived players may only participate in Region-sanctioned events or in neighboring regions which allow waivered players. Waived players are not eligible to compete in Region Championships, USAV Qualifiers or Bid Tournaments, or USAV National Championships.

**D. Junior Boys Playing on Girls' Teams and/or Junior Girls Playing on Boys' Teams.** For in-Region competition only, the Region permits Boys of certain ages to compete on Girls' teams in specified age groups. Boys who meet the twelve (12) and younger age definition may compete on twelve (12) and younger Girls' teams. Boys who meet the thirteen (13) and younger age definition may compete on thirteen (13) and younger Girls' teams. Boys who meet the fourteen (14) and younger age definition may play on Girls' teams in fifteen (15) and younger or older age groups. Individual Girls may compete on Boys' teams in their age group. Girls' teams may not compete in Boys' events. To find current age definitions, go to the Region website, click Indoor, then Age Definitions. Birth years change annually for each age group.

**DI. USAV Gender Policy.**

Although applicable to both adults and Juniors, questions about gender policy most often have arisen with respect to Junior athletes. This is a sensitive issue that has local, state, scholastic, national, and international repercussions. The USAV Gender Policy, which includes the procedure by which to apply to compete for a team of a different gender than that by which an individual was identified at birth, is attached as Appendix IV.

**DII. Junior Competition Levels.**

As Girls' Junior volleyball has exploded, USAV has increased the number of Girls' competition levels ("Divisions") to seven (7) to enable teams to compete against opponents of similar skills. As there are fewer Boys' teams, USAV offers three (3) competition levels and fewer age groups depending on Division for Boys' Junior volleyball. Club directors and coaches determine what level of competition at which to register or enter their respective teams. Girls' competition levels include Open, National, American, USA, Liberty, Freedom, and Patriot. Boys' competition levels include Open, USA, and Club. Regions may offer additional levels of competition depending on the number of teams. Competition levels in order of projected strength follow:

1. Girls' Junior National Championship Divisions (GJNC).

- a. Open (13-18 age categories) – This level earns bids for the GJNC only at Qualifiers.
- b. National (11-18 age categories) – Teams earn bids for National Division entries only through Regional Volleyball Associations except for the 11 and 12 age categories where additional bids may be earned at Qualifiers (because of the relatively few entries in these age groups at the National Championships).
- c. USA (12-18 age categories) – Bids earned only at Qualifiers.
- d. Liberty (13-18 age categories) – Bids earned only at Qualifiers.
- e. American (12-18 age categories) – Teams may earn bids through the Regions or through Qualifiers. The American and Patriot Divisions generally are the largest GJNC Division as measured by number of entries.

- f. Freedom (14-18 age categories) – Teams earn bids to this new GJNC Division only through Regions.
- g. Patriot (13-18 age categories) – Teams apply directly to USAV to enter this GJNC Division without having to qualify. Entries are accepted until the number of age Division slots fill.

2. Boys' Bid Tournaments and Junior National Championships (BJNC).
  - a. Open (14-18 age categories). Teams earn BJNC bids only at Bid Tournaments.
  - b. USA (14, 16-18 age categories). Teams earn BJNC bids only at Bid Tournaments.
  - c. Club 12-18 age categories). Teams apply directly to USAV to enter this BJNC Division without having to qualify. Entries are accepted until the number of age Division slots fill.

**G. Qualifying for Junior National Championships.**

Each Qualifier and Bid Tournament issues its own Manual (generally in electronic form) with information about the tournament. Much of the information remains the same from qualifying tournament to qualifying tournament, including frozen roster rules and penalties for not accepting bids. These are important policies that must be read and understood to avoid misunderstandings or worse. Ask your club director, coach, USAV, or Junior representative on the Region Board if you have any questions. See Articles III and IV above for Board, Officer, and Staff contact information.

**H. Junior Uniform Waiver Policy.**

Junior teams compete under the FIVB playing rules as modified by USAV for domestic competition. The rules include uniform requirements such as size and location of numbers, permissible numbers, contrasting colors between the libero and other players, and style and color for team uniforms. The Region does not enforce (waives) the uniform requirements until December 1 for the boys' season and until February 1 for the girls' season. This waiver means that uniform style and color for a team do not need to match until the stated dates. If uniforms for a team do not match, though, the team may not play with a libero. During the waiver period(s), any uniform numbers may be used, tryout t-shirts may be used as a team uniform, and uniform numbers need not be centered or included on both front and back of a jersey.

**I. Uniform requirement for Junior players competing on a team of the opposite gender (except in co-ed competition).**

After the waiver period for the relevant gender, a Junior player of one gender competing on a team of the other gender must wear colors that generally match the rest of the players, although boys and girls may wear shorts and shirts of different styles (consistent within the gender).

**J. Juniors competing on multiple teams.**

Region junior members may play on different teams in one club as they desire/are needed during the season, but only one team per day. The athlete and club are subject to the USAV frozen roster rule in which participation could further be limited.

**K. Adults affiliated with Junior teams.**

Adults affiliated with Junior teams include without limitation club directors, coaches, assistant coaches, volunteer coaches, trainers, athletic trainers, chaperones, tournament directors, and club administrators. All such affiliated adults must have a full Region Membership, pass a USAV background check, and successfully complete

SafeSport training. Parents and legal guardians who do not participate in practices or competitions other than as spectators do not need to satisfy such requirements. All head coaches and assistant coaches who are 18 years of age or older affiliated with a Junior club must be USAV IMPACT ("Increased Mastery and Professional Application of Coaching Theory") certified in accordance with USAV and Region policies. IMPACT certification is a prerequisite for more advanced USAV coaching courses. An assistant coach who has not attained the age of majority (the age when states deem an individual to be an adult for most purposes, which is 18 in all states except Alabama) in her or his state of residence must be supervised by a head coach recognized by the Region and must meet all other USAV and Region requirements applicable to coaches. Individuals registered as Junior players who have an interest in coaching should contact the Region about coaching eligibility.

Effective September 1, 2021, USAV has imposed additional safety education requirements under its Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies. That includes (i) offering Minor Athletes education on preventing and reporting child abuse; offering parent training on the same topics; (iii) encouraging volunteer adult participants to take the SafeSport Center's Volunteer Course (or SafeSport Trained Core course); (iv) requiring currency in SafeSport training (refresher courses annually and completion of the latest SafeSport Core Course at least once every four (4) years; and (v) **most critically and new, Junior athletes who turn age eighteen (18) during the season or are a senior in high school will be required to take "Core" SafeSport training upon turning age eighteen. A Junior athlete may complete this training while competing at age seventeen (17) if given parental consent to do so. Upon attaining age eighteen (18), the player will be ineligible to compete until she or he has completed such training.** To review the USAV MAAPP, go to <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/minor-athlete-abuse-prevention-policies/>

**L. Junior Club Code of Ethics and Expectations.**

Although there is no form to be signed (as there already are the Membership Code of Conduct, Coaches Code of Conduct, IMPACT training and certification, and SafeSport training), it is expected that head coaches, assistant coaches, tournament organizers, chaperones, and other personnel associated with a Junior club shall understand, read, and fulfill the following Junior Club Code of Ethics and Expectations (which Code in substantial part summarizes the aforementioned Codes and training and incorporates some Region policies such personnel are expected to know). Any violation of this Junior Club Personnel Code of Ethics may result in sanction being issued against the club representative, Member(s), and/or the club/team involved. These sanctions may include fines and/or loss or suspension of Membership privileges and eligibility for the club representative, other individual(s), entire club, and/or team involved:

1. Head coach or other equally qualified club personnel must be present at all practices and competitions. A head coach, adult club representative, or registered chaperone must be present during team-supervised travel. This individual shall be responsible for the moral, legal, and ethical well-being for each participant during team/club activities.

2. Coaches and other adults in positions of authority shall understand the unique power of such positions. Coaches and all other club personnel shall not exploit athletes and shall avoid any relationships which would violate the SafeSport Code or Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (“MAAPP”), could compromise the integrity of the learning and participation process, impair professional judgment, and/or take advantage of a situation for personal gain or gratification.
3. All club personnel must understand that all forms of sexual abuse, assault, or harassment of a current or former athlete are unethical, violate the SafeSport Code, and are illegal, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Club personnel shall not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with current athletes or other participants over whom there is/was authority.
4. Once a coach-athlete relationship is established, a power imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the coach-athlete relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for minor athletes after the coach-athlete relationship terminates until the athlete reaches 20 years of age.
5. All club personnel shall ensure that all individuals have met all Region Membership requirements and USAV requirements prior to participation in any club, team, and/or Region/National/USAV activities.
6. All club personnel may not participate in, require another individual to participate in, or condone any act considered to be illegal under federal, state, or local laws and/or ordinances and or USAV/Region policies.
7. All club personnel shall strive to educate their athletes and personnel to respect, honor, and adhere to the rules of the facility being used during practices, tournaments, or events. In this regard, more stringent rules of a facility shall have priority over Region rules and policies.
8. All club personnel shall ensure that all activities are suitable for the age, experience, and ability of their athletes.
9. All club personnel shall seek professional medical advice when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue training or playing.
10. All club personnel shall, while serving in a professional capacity, avoid any drug, tobacco, or alcohol use while in the presence of athletes.
11. All club personnel shall not supply or condone the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices, fireworks, ammunition, firearms, knives, or any item or material that can be used as a weapon, to any of the participants or athletes and shall report any athlete using or in the possession of the same.
12. All club personnel shall not allow, encourage, condone, or require any behavior that threatens an athlete's amateur status or Region, USAV, school, and/or collegiate eligibility.
13. All club personnel shall maintain all relationships with other club personnel on a professional and confidential basis.
14. All club personnel must be positive role models. This includes being courteous, respectful, and polite to players, parents, other coaches, club directors, event personnel, and officials.
15. All club personnel will not engage in any physical, verbal, or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or coercion of current and/or former athletes. Such behavior is illegal and in violation of the SafeSport Code.

16. All club personnel will immediately report any suspected case of illegal activity, abuse, assault, harassment, or ethical violations of this Junior Club Personnel Code of Ethics to the appropriate legal authorities, including USAV, SafeSport, and Region Administrators.

**M. USOC, USAV, and Region SafeSport Policy.**

The vulnerability of young athletes in all sports to adults who have any level of control or responsibility and, in fact, the shocking number of instances in which adults have harmed young athletes or permitted harm to occur, compelled the USOC to establish the United States Center for SafeSport (often referred to as “SafeSport”). SafeSport, in turn, created policies, procedures, and training to protect young athletes from predatory adults, harm from harassment and hazing, and other forms of exploitation and physical and/or emotional harm. All adults affiliated or associated with Junior volleyball must complete SafeSport training. Such adults include without limitation club directors, coaches, chaperones, tournament organizers, other club or team personnel, officials, Region Board members, Region Officers, and Region Staff.

Adults may register for SafeSport training through their SportsEngine Account at any point after becoming a member of the Region. USAV requires reporting of sexual misconduct by any Member including the reporting of any concerns about inappropriate behavior or treatment of young athletes to SafeSport. Completion of SafeSport training gives permission for SafeSport staff to contact the SafeSport-trained individual to investigate a report. Player safety is critical. So, too, is candor in reporting perceived misconduct. Knowingly making a false or vindictive report will not be tolerated and may violate USAV’s Code of Conduct.

For information on how to report an incident, go to <https://usavolleyball.org/safesport/for-athletes/>. Scroll down through the website and click on the relevant Report Abuse Information in the middle of the page under “Report Abuse” or call (720) 531-0340 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. MT. See also the SafeSport Information page as part of Appendix VI.

**N. Junior Travel Policy.**

Commensurate with the Codes of Conduct, SafeSport training, and other policies enacted to protect the safety and wellbeing of Junior athletes, USAV established a Junior Travel Policy. Some tournaments involve overnight stays and long-distance travel. The lengthy and detailed USAV Junior Travel Policy is attached as Appendix V. Coaches, club directors, and chaperones are required to review and understand the Junior Travel Policy and to share that Policy with parents of Junior athletes.

**O. Junior Transfer Policy.**

**As a general rule, Junior players cannot transfer to a different club after they have competed in a USAV or Region-sanctioned event (defined to be a tournament) for a club.** Clubs must inform Junior players and their parent(s)/guardian(s) about the Region and USAV transfer policy before they sign a contract committing to the club. Please note that the USAV Frozen Roster/Player Policy for Qualifiers, Bid Tournaments, and National Championships also affects Junior transfers. Rare exceptions to the Junior Transfer Policy are considered on a case-by-case basis and include the following:

1. A Club Director’s written release.
2. The athlete’s safety or well-being is in question.

3. When a player's commitment in a season has been completed.
4. A change in geographical location due to a job or military transfer or scholastic or intercollegiate status will receive special consideration.

**P. Frozen Roster/Player Policy.**

Each year, USAV prepares Manuals detailing policies and requirements for Qualifiers, Bid Tournaments, and National Championships. Tournaments organized by regional volleyball associations that qualify teams for the National Championships are subject to most of the policies contained in such Manuals, including the Frozen Roster/Player Policy. In summary, when a team qualifies for the National Championships and accepts the bid, the roster with which that team qualified is "frozen," which means it cannot be changed and its individual players cannot compete on any other team attempting to qualify for the National Championships. The 2022 (latest) USAV Girls Championship Manual may be found at:

[Introduction \(usavolleyball.org\)](https://usavolleyball.org/introduction)

The 2023 (latest) USAV Boys Championship Manual may be found at:

<https://usavolleyball.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/23-Boys-Championship-Manual-Final.pdf>

**Q. Junior Tryout and Practice Dates**

NOTE: Tryout and practice dates could change each season.

1. Girls All Divisions - first legal date for tryouts is **Saturday, July 15, 2023** (1st Allowable girls try-out date will be second Saturday after final date of USAV nationals (with impending possible dates i.e. Illinois dead date, etc.))
2. Everything (tryouts, offers, and payments) for girls may happen on or after July 16, 2022.
3. Note that there are the Illinois High School Association restrictions regarding High School Girls in August and in the IHSA season.
4. Club Practices for girls ages 14 and under may be held on or after September 1st, 2023.
5. Boys All Divisions- first legal date for tryouts is **Saturday, August 12, 2023**
6. Everything (tryouts, offers, and payments) for boys may happen on or after the first allowable tryout date.
7. Club Practices for Boys of all age groups may start on or after September 1, 2023.

**R. Junior Officiating.**

Some Regions require that Junior teams must provide a trained second referee (R2), line judges, scorer, and libero tracker for local tournaments. The Great Lakes Region does not impose such requirements. At Region Tournaments, a paid first referee (R1) is provided. At Qualifiers and Bid Tournaments, either a paid R2 is provided, or a team must provide an adult R2. Another critical requirement in Qualifier/Bid Tournament manuals is that an adult on a team's roster must be present at the scorer's table when the team is working. Failure to meet that requirement can result in point penalties or even forfeiture in the subsequent match. It is possible for Junior athletes to become certified officials able to work as R1, R2, or Scorer for compensation. Contact the Officials' Chair or Officials' Representative for more information. Indeed, there is a need to train and qualify more officials.

**S. National Team Development Program (formerly High Performance).**

In place of the previous High Performance Programs and Championships designed to identify strong Junior athletes with National Team potential (with a secondary benefit of providing a showcase for college coaches), USAV is developing a National Team Development Program (NTDP). The NTDP will feature Training Series and “accelerator programs” through which Regions and other entities may nominate strong Junior athletes unnoticed by NTDP scouts to participate in showcase competitions.

**T. Windy City Power League.**

The Region sanctions the Windy City Power League (WCPL). The WCPL offers strong competition in Open and Club Divisions in all age groups. A committee of club directors organizes the league, while the Region administers the revenues, disbursements and assigns officials. Having grown nearly every season, the WCPL features many of the strongest Region teams and welcomes teams from other regions. The top Region finishers at season end earn bids to the Girls’ Junior National Championships. Information about the WCPL may be found at may found at: <https://www.greatlakesvolleyball.org/wordpress/windy-city-power-league/>

## **IX. Junior Recruiting**

**A. General Statement.**

Junior volleyball is flourishing. Athletes enjoy the game and begin to play at ever-younger ages. Junior clubs are growing, and some have become established enterprises. Competition between clubs for stronger players, indeed for all fee-paying players, has become fierce. Clubs have invested money, time, and effort in better coaches, facility purchases and leases, training, communications, tryouts, leagues, security, travel, and competitions.

As a result, greater attention has been focused on Junior recruiting. Indeed, reports of alleged recruiting policy violations have mushroomed, and clubs have begun to retain lawyers to defend against such reports, including challenges to the Region’s due process procedures. The significant diversion of Region funds, time, and other resources from its primary purposes of fostering volleyball and creating volleyball opportunities persuaded the Region Board recently to clarify, simplify, and objectify Region due process procedures. The frequency and cost of addressing reports of alleged recruiting violations suggested that recruiting policies warranted a separate section of this Handbook.

There are two basic types of recruiting issues: (i) those issues that endanger a Junior athlete’s scholastic, USAV, and/or NCAA or other type of college eligibility and (ii) those that are deemed to imperil a club or team’s investment in, and/or membership contract with, a player and her or his family. Reports submitted to the Region in recent years generally fall under the second category.

There is a vague line differentiating (i) policies that reasonably protect clubs and players and (ii) policies that constitute perceived or actual over-regulation. A desire to escape from perceived excess bureaucracy is one of the reasons some clubs have joined other volleyball organizations. A parallel reason for such joinder is to escape from the limitations of recruiting policies. Please know that the Region Board has strived to establish recruiting policies that protect clubs and players without over-regulating. The Board expanded Junior representation in its recent revision of the

Region Bylaws so that more people will be invested in developing reasonable and helpful Region policies and procedures.

Recruiting involves many aspects including without limitation direct marketing; communications by letter, e-mail, text, telephone, or personal conversation; and tryouts. There are also activities that expose athletes to a club, facility, or coaches that certainly encompass some level of recruiting opportunity. They include without limitation leagues, open gyms at a facility where a club normally practices, and coaches who also coach a school or college team. Properly conducted, these indirect recruiting opportunities are acknowledged to be permissible in part because they create volleyball opportunities generally. That a club can afford to own or lease a facility or run a special league is a good thing; it might also mean that the club is more expensive to join than one that does not offer the same benefits. These are all factors Junior players, and their families consider when joining a club.

Basic recruiting and related policies are stated below. Relevant definitions are also listed below. To avoid undue lengthening of the Handbook, additional recruiting information may be found on the Region website under “Juniors.”

**B. Recruiting policies.**

Club personnel may not contact Junior players who have formally committed to another Region club. Salutations and conversational greetings are allowed. In addition, club personnel may not send or tag information about their club or teams to a Junior Member who has formally committed to another Region club. Such communications include all social media platforms including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. Clubs should abide by and inform their member players, parents, coaches, and other personnel about Region recruiting policies. Encouraging Junior members of a club to recruit other Junior players while they are committed to another club constitutes illegal recruiting.

**C. Timing.**

Illegal recruiting involves making a direct or indirect attempt to persuade a Junior athlete to join one club (whether for the current or next season) (i) while she or he is committed to another Region club or (ii) during a period when recruiting is not permitted under Region policies. Players are not property and cannot be bound by a club for more than one (1) season. The investment clubs make in their players must be respected. Membership in a club involves the mutual promises of training, competition, best effort, and commitment. At some time, that mutual and contractual commitment expires, at which time the player is free to consider other clubs and the club is free to consider other players. Upon such expiration, recruiting is permissible and completely legal. There is no “open season” for direct communications with a player who played for a different club the prior season. The only time direct contact may be made with a Junior player is (i) if she or he did not play for a different club the year before; or (ii) if she or he initiates contact with a different club. General or indirect communications are permitted as explained below.

**D. Open gym policies.**

Open gym sessions are allowed; however, they may NOT be conducted while the athletes are involved in their high school season. There may be no coaching or instruction in the skills and techniques of volleyball at any time during an open gym. Participation must be voluntary and not required directly or indirectly for membership

on a team. An open gym may not be a pre-tryout, evaluation, observation, appraisal, assessment, or anything that could possibly be construed as a tryout.

Any player opting to attend an open gym may receive information from the hosting club while in attendance. After the open gym, there may be no direct communication unless specifically requested. An email from the hosting club may be used to communicate information about open gyms but may not include try-out information or club advertisements. The sign-in shall not constitute automatic permission to be added to the club's recruiting list.

**E. Marketing:**

Clubs and teams absolutely have the right to promote their benefits and opportunities. However, marketing can also encompass gray areas that become illegal recruiting. Legal marketing includes flyers, brochures, or newsletters; newspaper advertisements; websites with articles and photographs; or direct mailings to an entire geographic area not addressed to a specific person. Such mailings may be addressed to "Sir or Madam, Occupant, or Resident." Clubs may market or advertise their benefits and services at any point throughout the year. Marketing may be used for camps, clinics, tryouts, and/or private lessons.

Intentional marketing to Junior athletes committed to another club would constitute illegal recruiting. Examples include advertising to a group based on a list of players procured from the Region, a tournament organizer, or the USAV national office; advertising to a former club or team that one is switching clubs or establishing a new club; contacting a list of players from a High Performance where one worked.

**F. Relevant definitions:**

1. Club personnel: Any and all adults associated with a Junior club.
2. Prospective club player: A Junior athlete who solicits information about a club either personally or through her/his parent/guardian. A Junior athlete who did not play with a USAV/Region Junior club during the previous season. A Junior athlete during the open recruiting period.
3. Committed club player: A Junior athlete registered with the Region and has played in a USAV/Region-sanctioned event (tournament) during the current season for a club.

## X. Frequently asked questions and examples related to recruiting with rationale.

The following answers to frequently asked questions and examples are offered to help clarify Region recruiting policies. For all scenarios, assume that the player in question is a Region Member with another club.

- A. In March, a player calls the coach of a different team, expresses unhappiness with her current team, inquires if there is a spot on the other coach's team, and states she understands the other team has a spring tryout. **Illegal** to recruit for the current season if the player has played in a tournament for the club. **Legal** to recruit for the following season as this player-initiated contact.
- B. A player asks one of a coach from another team to provide a private lesson. After the lesson, the mom states that her daughter does not receive this level of coaching with her current club.
  1. Coach then proceeds to recruit. **Illegal** to recruit. Private lessons, although **Legal** if requested by a player, are not an open invitation to recruit. Complimenting a coach, by itself, does not open the door to recruit
  2. Parent directly asks about switching club, etc. **Legal**
- C. A player's parent(s) contact a player's school coach during the summer to discuss the daughter's future and progress in the school program. The school coach works for a different club than the player's club. Summer tryouts have just finished, and the player did not resign from her old club. **Illegal** to recruit. That player is still a member of her current club as the season club has not ended yet. A summer meeting about a school future during the club season with another club coach equates to club activity.
- D. A player plays in an in-house program. An in-house program involves competition only within the club. The program does not register those kids with the Region. Such activity is **Legal** but not encouraged or a good practice. The player is clearly part of the in-house club or group even though she did not obtain Region Membership. To recruit would invite predatory recruiting in all similar situations.
- E. A coach establishes a private lesson organization not affiliated with a club. As the organization is publicized as having no club affiliation, the coach wishes to recruit or invite players to sign up for lessons. However, the three tutoring coaches also coach club. **Illegal**. Club personnel cannot "turn off" club membership by declaring "this action is not USAV-related" as a means by which to circumvent recruiting rules.
- F. A club coach hosts a **Legal** "non-USA V open gym" and players from a different club attend with their friends. **Illegal** to recruit based on this information because presence at an open gym is not an invitation to recruit. It is **Legal** to respond if a player solicits information about the host club.
- G. A club coach hears through the grapevine that Mary-Middle did not re-sign with her club during the club's re-sign period and the club coach's July tryouts are in a week. **Illegal** to recruit. Just because a player passed on an option to tryout or re-sign with her current club does not mean that she is necessarily looking for other clubs. If this player reached out to the club coach (initiated contact), attended the coach's tryout, or

the previous season had ended, then recruiting would be **Legal**. Memberships are a year-long commitment; the season ends September 1.

H. A club and high school coach run a school camp for school feeder programs. After the camp, a parent or a daughter from a different club compliments the camp and coaching style. **Illegal** to recruit. Compliments are not questions or inquiries about the other club or a request to recruit.

1. A parent of a player from another club observes a high school coach who is also a club coach. She states, “Wow, your team is really good. Where do they play club?” Answering the question is **Legal**; however, recruiting player without the player’s or her parents’ request for club information is **Illegal**

I. It is May and a player from another team has quit from her team that is going to Nationals. Even though she quit, she remains a member of the other club and cannot be recruited for the following club season. **Illegal**.

J. A player’s school coach tells you that he has been encouraging Mary-Middle to join a different club and wants a different club’s coach to talk to her. **Illegal**.

K. A player’s friend tells a club coach that Suzie-setter has decided to leave her club after this season, but she has not decided where she will play next year. **Illegal** to recruit. A statement from a third party (hearsay) is not the same as a player directly reaching out or contacting another club coach.

L. A coach is not affiliated with a club, but her close family member runs a club. The family member did not make such a request, but the coach observes talented players and recruits (encourages) them to switch clubs. The coach is not on the family member’s payroll. **Illegal-vicarious liability**. Club members, especially directors, should explain recruiting rules to close family members if they are involved in volleyball.

M. Asking a coach “please hand these flyers out to your entire team” **Legal**, since this is not targeting at a single player and there are no individual messages written. This would be considered **Legal** (general) advertising.

N. Making a social media post so that everyone who follows a club can see it. **Legal**. If an athlete follows a club, it is reasonable for her to see the club’s posts. However, a player following a club does not entitle that club (**Illegal**) to reach out to the player with a direct or targeted contact.

O. A club coach tells a club parent that the team needs a setter and ask her to invite Suzie setter from another club to come to tryouts. **Illegal**. Team parents may extoll a club or coach’s virtues and values as they want on their own accord. Asking parents to recruit a player from another club is still **Illegal** recruiting.

P. A club employs a ‘director of recruitment’ who is not a USAV member and offers a ‘free assessment’ as a private lesson. **Illegal**. All club members must follow Region recruiting guidelines even if they have not become Members of the Region or are not on a club’s payroll. Invitations to a ‘free assessment’ constitute recruiting.

Q. A club coach invites May-middle from another club to a private lesson/open gym/etc. which is not a USAV event. **Illegal**. Members cannot circumvent recruiting rules by inviting them to a non-USA event.

- R. A coach conducting private lessons asks one of the players to “bring your school setter to the next lesson.” **Illegal**. Recruiting through other people is still recruiting.
- S. A coach is leaving her club to join another. The coach invites his/her former team to the new club’s tryouts. **Illegal**. All club coaches must follow the Region recruiting rules even if they change clubs.
- T. A club member obtains a list of Region players from or through the USAV national office and sends a mailing to that list. **Illegal**. Although arguably legal advertising, the composition of the list as all or primarily Region players would constitute targeting and **Illegal** recruiting.
- U. A club member obtains a list from a park district. This list includes some Region Members but was not assembled based on Region Membership. The club sends general advertising and tryout information to the entire list. **Legal**. This would be considered **Legal** advertising.
- V. A coach converses with a player she used to coach who now plays for a different club. **Legal**. The conversation turns to volleyball at which point the coach asserts that the player’s current club has her playing the wrong position. **Illegal**. Exchanging pleasantries is legal. Any topics that could be misconstrued as undermining the player’s current club is **Illegal** recruiting.
- W. A club coach recruits a player from a different club that has no affiliation or Membership with the Region. **Legal**. However, such recruiting is not a good practice as it opens the door to predatory recruiting between Region clubs and clubs that belong to a different volleyball organization.

## XI. Adults.

The Great Lakes Region is one of the few Regional Volleyball Associations still offering a reasonable wealth of adult volleyball competition. Indeed, at some USAV Open Championships, the Great Lakes Region has entered the largest number of teams of any Region. Competition levels are divided by skill level (Open, AA, A, BB, B, Co-Ed, Reverse Co-Ed) and age groups (usually in five-year (sometimes four (4) years in the most senior age groups) increments beginning at age forty (40) or forty-five (45)).

The Region has established the following modifications to USAV playing rules and protocols for in-Region adult competition:

### A. Rules.

Except as specified below the current USAV playing rules will be followed.

### B. Uniforms.

Team uniforms need not match in color or design. Numbers may be permanent or taped on. If a Libero is being used, his or her shirt must contrast with the rest of the team’s shirts – i.e., light in contrast to the team’s dark shirts or vice versa; a color different from a single color for all teammates; clearly multi-colored in contrast to the team’s solid-colored shirts; or numbered when all other shirts do not have a number.

The tournament director has the final decision on all uniform questions.

C. Team Affiliations.

Region adult Members may play on as many different teams as they desire during the season, but only one team per day. A group of adult Members may also form new teams from time to time. Teams are trusted to compete at the appropriate level based on their composite strength.

D. Divisions.

The Region sanctions each adult tournament as either a men's or women's event. The tournament director then determines the division(s) of competition either in advance or based on strength of entries.

E. Tournaments.

Tournaments will be sanctioned from November 1 to August 31 of each season. All participants must be members in good standing of GLR and/or USA Volleyball. The use of certified referees is an option, but not a requirement. The tournament director, or designee (who must be a Region Member in good standing), must be present for the duration of a tournament. Please refer to the current Tournament Director's Manual found on the Great Lakes Region website. <https://www.greatlakesvolleyball.org/wordpress/>

F. Tournament Directors.

Tournament Directors must sign an agreement with the Region stating that they will accept and follow all Region/USA V rules, policies, and procedures regarding adult tournaments regarding safety, communication, and other basics. Tournaments may vary in style or format, but variances should be sent in advance entering teams are aware of them. The minimum penalty for violating this rule will be the revocation of all tournament sanctions for the remainder of the season.

G. Sanctioning and Scheduling of Tournaments.

All adult tournaments must be sanctioned by the Region Tournament Director.

H. Rosters.

Team representatives are responsible for ensuring that current team rosters have been submitted to the tournament director on or before the day of a tournament, prior to the team's first match of the day. Roster changes may only be made by the tournament director on the day of the tournament.

## XII. Great Lakes Region Due Process.

The Great Lakes Region exists to foster volleyball – to support, develop, promote, and organize volleyball opportunities for its members. To accomplish those goals, the Region Board has established certain policies and procedures. To protect volleyball players, and particularly vulnerable young volleyball players, the Region and USA Volleyball also have established certain Codes and policies. They cover improper interaction with individuals (sexual exploitation, abuse (mental and physical), harassment, hazing, recruiting that places scholastic and college eligibility at risk, and recruiting that violates a club's investment in an athlete). At the same time, volleyball has become a business for some people who are able to earn incomes, sometimes substantial, as club organizers and coaches.

On occasion, there is an alleged or perceived violation of these Codes and policies. Some reports have involved alleged true danger to an athlete – whether risk to eligibility or physical/emotional harm. Others have involved one club claiming another

club improperly recruited one of the players in which it has invested time and effort or to which the club has a claim under Region policies and procedures.

The Region has spent many thousands of dollars trying to enforce Region and USAV policies and Codes. Decades ago, there were large expenditures because of the sexual exploitation of Junior athletes. More recently, there have been legal and other fees addressing accusations mostly about alleged violations of Region recruiting policies. As the Region grew from a small non-profit organization to one with a sizeable budget and clubs earning substantial incomes, the Region has had to spend substantial sums on attorneys as complaints about one club illegally recruiting have multiplied.

Correspondingly, as the Region has evolved, the Region Officers have changed from volunteers to paid employees. The growth of the Region and evolution of Region personnel resulted in conflicts or contradictions between the Region Bylaws and Region Handbook about how to address reports of alleged infractions and authority of Region Officers and staff. For these reasons, the Region Board invested significant time recently revising the Region Bylaws (the controlling instrument or document for the Region) with particular focus on the due process for addressing reported alleged violations of Region and/or USAV policies or Codes.

The Region Board took great pains to create a set of due process procedures that are objective, fair, timely, simpler than in the past, complementary to the Region's purpose and activities, and do not involve Region staff or Board members. They are stated in Article IX of the Region Bylaws. The Bylaws supersede this Handbook and would apply if there is any conflict between this explanation and the Bylaws.

It should be emphasized that the Region is not a judicial body. Rather, it is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering volleyball in the Northern Illinois area. The Region Board makes strategic plans, and creates policies and procedures, to achieve that goal of fostering volleyball. Part of that responsibility involves enforcement of the policies and procedures enacted by the Board and/or USAV.

The due process procedures of the Region follow:

A. Report. If there is a report of an alleged violation of Region or USAV policies or procedures, the reporting or affected party will be encouraged, if possible, to resolve the issue with the club in alleged violation. In addition, Region staff or Board members may attempt to resolve the issue in prompt and informal fashion.

B. First Level of due process. If the issue cannot be resolved informally and promptly, the report (or accusation) shall be forwarded to the next Region Arbitrator without a conflict of interest in a sequence of identified Region Arbitrators. Region Arbitrators shall be selected and/or recruited annually or as needed from among Region Members with a general reputation for fairness, objectivity, maturity, common sense, experience, knowledge of the game and the Region, and/or integrity. To maximize objectivity, current Board members, Region Officers, and staff may not serve as Arbitrators.

The Arbitrator entrusted with the report shall be charged with (i) investigating the alleged infraction; (ii) collecting information, evidence, and related testimony; and (iii) preparing a decision about what action, if any, to take with respect to the alleged violation of Region or USAV policy or Code, all as quickly as reasonably possible. Decisions should include (i) a statement of the alleged infraction; (ii) the facts ascertained, and conclusions reached (remorse, veracity, innocent vs. intentional

violation, no violation, etc.); witnesses interviewed (redacting names if the Arbitrator believes there is risk of retribution, retaliation, or harm); and decision about what action, if any, to take. As there was a worry about the potential for an individual Arbitrator to harbor a bias (subconscious or otherwise) against one of the parties involved, the Board decided that the draft decision should be submitted to two other Region Arbitrators for quick review and comment with respect to fairness and objectivity. After the originally assigned Arbitrator has made revisions, if any, following such review, the decision shall be transmitted to the party accused of violation.

Any such first-level decision might determine that no infraction occurred, no action be taken regardless, the accused party be admonished against repeating a certain action, a specific sanction be assessed, or that such other action be taken or imposed to correct the alleged wrongdoing. Note that subjective factors might affect a decision. Factors (subjective and empirical) considered include, without limitation, perception of an innocent violation vs. intentional violation; degree of remorse; gravity of violation, if a violation is determined; attempts to repair or cure a violation; actual harm caused; and history of violations, if any. There might be less flexibility for a decision if the Region Board has established an automatic sanction upon determination that a specific violation has occurred. The first-level decision shall be delivered to the relevant (accused) party.

C. Second Level of due process. The party receiving a decision shall have fourteen (14) days from receipt to appeal. If no appeal occurs within fourteen (14) days or the party expresses an earlier acceptance of the decision, the decision shall stand. If the party wishes to appeal, she, he, or it must submit a letter or other document to the Region office with any supporting evidence (video, documents, statements, etc.) and a list of any witnesses the appealing party would like to be interviewed in support of its appeal.

The Commissioner shall assign the appeal and any material collected by the first level Arbitrator to the next Arbitrator on the list without a conflict of interest. That Arbitrator shall be charged with recruiting two (2) Region Members in good standing to serve as an impartial Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consider the evidence and materials submitted; may pose questions; shall interview witnesses; and, if the appealing party so desires, shall hear that party's statement or presentation. Such work may be performed piecemeal and need not involve a hearing.

It must be re-emphasized that the Region is not a judicial body. It is a non-profit athletic organization with a mission to foster volleyball in Northern Illinois. As part of that mission, it sometimes must take steps to enforce its policies and procedures in a fair and reasonable manner. The Region's due process does not involve resolution of disputes between two clubs or other parties; those are private matters. A reporter of an alleged violation is not a party; he or she is a witness. Thus, a reporter will only participate in Region due process to the extent an Arbitrator or Appeals Committee deems it helpful to collect information, evidence, or testimony from her or him. A party alleged to have violated a Region or USAV policy or procedure does not have a right to confront, cross examine, or interview a reporter. The right and discretion to interview the reporter belongs solely to the first level Arbitrator and, if there is an appeal, the second level Appeals Committee.

An accused party may employ an attorney to be present when a first level Arbitrator interviews him or her, to assist with submission of documents and evidence upon appeal, or, if desired, to interview the appealing party and that party's witnesses

upon appeal. There is no attorney right to be present when an Arbitrator or Appeals Committee interviews other witnesses. An attorney might instruct her or his client not to answer a question but, again, the Region due process is not a judicial system subject to rules of evidence and civil procedure. Consequently, presumptions about innocence or guilt or veracity may be made from a refusal to answer questions.

After reviewing all evidence and hearing relevant testimony, the Appeals Committee shall prepare a decision in the same general format as the first level Arbitrator. That decision shall be delivered to the appealing party.

D. Third Level of due process. If the party receiving an Appeals Committee decision wishes to appeal, he, she, or it shall have fourteen (14) days to appeal to the Region Board. However, any such appeal shall be limited to an argument that the appealing party was not accorded reasonable due process. The Region Board may (i) determine that reasonable due process was accorded in which case the Appeals Committee decision shall stand; (ii) remand the matter to the level at which due process was deemed not to have been reasonable (whether first level or second level with a different Arbitrator now assigned) for reconsideration; or (iii) abandon the matter for practical or other reasons.

Note that matters involving an alleged violation of local, state, or Federal law must be turned over to the relevant authorities. Further, any allegation involving the safety of athletes must be turned over to Safesport for resolution. Any sanctions imposed by an Arbitrator or Appeals Committee are suspended if an appeal is filed unless the safety of an individual, a significant sum of money, is at risk or a similar factor is present.

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