



*Pumas
Volleyball
Club*

PLAYERS + PARENTS HANDBOOK 2019 –20 SEASON

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Brief History of Pumas Volleyball Club

The Pumas Volleyball Club, formally the Andover Volleyball Club, was founded in 2003 by Bonnie Zeigler and Steve McRoy. However, its roots go back to 1995 when they began teaching volleyball to grades 2-5 at Sanborn Elementary (Andover Ma.) as part of their "Explorations" before/after school program. They constructed poles out of 2x4s with holes at varying heights, so the nets could be adjusted. They used two pickle ball nets borrowed from the school, and large, soft beginner volleyballs. In 1999 they added a program at West Middle School (Andover Ma.) for grades 6-8 and moved it to the new Wood Hill Middle in 2002 while continuing to teach kids shuttled over from other middle schools. In 2003 they added an after-school program at High Plain Elementary School (Andover Ma.), and in winter of 2004 they started our Junior Olympic Volleyball Club.

We are staffed by volleyball-loving enthusiasts and professionals. Our mission is to give kids the opportunity to learn volleyball skills at an early age and in an organized way. Our Junior Olympic program has grown from three teams in 2004 to a high of 37 teams in 2013. As the years have gone by the number of clubs in our area (within an hour of Lowell) has gone from five in 2004, to 22 clubs in 2017-18. There are currently 75 clubs in New England with almost 30% of them within an hour of where we practice. This shows the growing popularity that volleyball has been cultivating as it becomes the **#1 team sport** for HS age girls across the nation (since 2016).

Why A Players + Parents Handbook

This handbook will help you to understand the coaching philosophies that we want you to embrace as Pumas athletes and what is required of you from the Pumas organization. This is meant to be a *living document* and will be updated accordingly. Your viewpoint and input will be used to guide us as we continue to educate the players, parents, coaches and administrative staff through each season. We feel strongly that success comes from the growth of all involved.

Volleyball is a unique and exciting sport. There is no other sport where the athletes must keep the ball in continuous motion the whole time. This makes for a fast-paced game that can be a thing of beauty to watch as all the players work together. Athletes who study the game and apply the lessons learned relish every opportunity to practice and play. Spectators who watch competitive volleyball for the first time are easily hooked.

What makes volleyball unique?

- The ball is rebounded- it is never held once it is put into play; athletes must control the ball with an instantaneous contact.
- The ball cannot touch the floor - Once the ball hits the floor, the play is dead.
- The court is the smallest in size per person - Volleyball has the most crowded court of all sports with the smallest dimensions which allows less space per player.
- The game can be played on any surface - Sand, grass, asphalt, wood, water and even snow can be used.
- Anyone can play – You do not have to be a true Olympian to play. Players include the backyard family game, high school, Club, Collegiate, intellectually disabled, physically disabled to the Olympic stars. Male and female.
- The speed of the ball varies - the speed of the ball can range from very slow to over 80 miles an hour (Olympians) yet the players wear no protection.

- There is a limited number of attempts to play the ball (3) - the limitation of attempts made to play the ball requires that the ball be returned to the opponent's court quickly and occasionally in less than desirable methods.
- There is no time limit - Most games are played to 25 points with a lead of 2 to win.
- Players must be able to play multiple positions - The various rotations of players require that they be skilled in many, if not all, facets of the game. Imagine a Baseball or Hockey team having to rotate positions after every inning.
- Spiking the ball is the second most difficult skill in all of sport – The athletes are trying to attack the ball with a spike while both the ball and the athlete are flying through the air, from different angles and speeds. They must meet at the right spot above the ground for the spike to be successful.
- Volleyball is a sport where your skills are not interfered with by the opponent - They cannot come across the net and set a pick on you; they cannot tackle you and prevent you from playing the ball.
- No other instrument is used in this rebound sport - Other rebound sports like tennis, racquetball, etc. use specially designed rebounding equipment. Volleyball players must use their body to contact the ball.
- Teamwork is essential - The basic aspect of the game is a pass, set, hit sequence which requires 3 hits with at least 2 players working together and usually a third to make the return. Communication is essential to teamwork.
- A true no-contact sport. This is the only sport which players are separated and are not allowed to make contact with equipment (other than the ball) or other players. Players must learn to deal with aggression and frustration in a new way unlike that of roughing up the opponent as in football.
- The GAME is really one for a lifetime - There are always opportunities to enjoy and contribute at so many levels. Most athletes start out as a player but can also evolve into Officials, Coaches or Club Administrators.
- Volleyball is the second most popular sport in the world – Soccer still has a hold on number 1.
- Volleyball is the most popular team sport for high school girls in the USA – Volleyball grabbed the number one spot from basketball.

Your Pumas coaches love volleyball. They are committed to you as students of the game, as athletes, and as young women. It is their goal to provide every opportunity for you to become as good as you want or can be. More important, they strive to help you and your teammates become the best **team** you can be.

Our club philosophy is to foster the development of athletic skill, knowledge, leadership, and sportsmanship in local and national amateur youth volleyball competitions. We strive to develop the athlete as a whole; rather than focus on winning as the sole benchmark.

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CHAPTER 1: PRESEASON

USAV Membership

One of the first things you are required to do is register or renew your USAV membership. This membership is required for everyone. Several benefits of a USAV membership is access to online education, USAV Volley USA magazine, National Background screening of all coaches, Minimum training of IMPACT + SAFESPORT for all coaches, and secondary insurance. You should renew or register the beginning of October to take care of any issues that may arise. Renewing the night before, or day of a tryout, may lead to frustration if you do not remember your log-in from the year before. You will not be allowed on the court without a current up to date membership.

Tryout Registration

This is the kick off to everything we connect our data to and is a separate registration from the USAV membership. Early tryout registration is key as it lets us see the numbers that are coming to tryouts. This guides us in the number of coaches needed for the season, what age or level coaches may be assigned to, as well as courts rented for tryouts and the season. We do accept registrations all the way up to the start of the last tryout. Everyone registering must do so online. You must register online before being allowed to tryout.

Calendar

During the preseason you should check the Pumas website for the season dates of all possible tournaments. These will be listed as possible for all teams as some of the travel tournaments may not have teams dedicated to go until they are formed. During the Pumas registration you will be asked your availability for each tournament, in case you are on a team that may attend more than the local one-day NERVA tournaments.

CHAPTER 2: TRYOUTS

Tryouts are a season unto themselves. It officially begins once registration is open and ends once the first practice has taken place. For those nine weeks there is dual preparation for the season that continues as well as the fast approaching tryouts. This is such a labor-intensive time that it has its own handout. If you did not receive a copy of our four-page, ***Parent Guide to What Happens at a Pumas Tryout***, then email the director and it will be sent to you.

CHAPTER 3: PRACTICES

USAV Registration

Only USAV registered players and coaches may be on the courts or coaching the players. This means that parents/caregivers may not participate in practice or tournaments, in any way.

Equipment Set-Up/Take-Down

Teams that start the day in the gym must put up the nets. Make sure that the nets are at the correct heights with the antennas in the correct position and all padding attached. If the facility sets the nets up, you must double check that it is at the correct height, antennas are installed correctly, and all safety pads are attached.

If your team is the last team in the gym you will be required to take down the net/s and put them away in their proper place unless directed differently by the facility staff.

At the UMass Lowell Rec Center there are additional curtains that must be pulled down to cover the large windows. This is on any sunny day from about 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm as the sun coming through the windows can make it difficult to see. These curtains are permanent and may be put up or down from the chain on the window.

All equipment and facilities must be Treated with Respect. Equipment should be put away neatly and correctly. Notify your coach of any abnormalities, equipment failure or problems at/with the facilities **ASAP**. The facilities we use can be taken away at any time and we must do our best to be proactive in making sure everything is in good working order and we abide by each facilities rules.

Come to Practice Early & Prepared

Prepare to be prepared! Come early so the moment your court time starts you can be on the court with a full team. This means you should be showing up 15 minutes before your coach wants you to be there. Putting your shoes on when you are supposed to be on the court is not good preparation and sends a negative message to your coach and your teammates. If you are late you should be hustling in, not strolling by as if the team and court will be there for when **you** are ready. There may be times that your coach is having a meeting before or after practice, make sure you are there BEFORE the meeting is due to start.

Being prepared means you have all the equipment you need to participate fully. Equipment such as shoes, shorts, sweats, water, and any needed medications. It is also recommended to have a small emergency bag in your gym bag that can be filled with saline (if you wear contacts), extra pair of shoelaces, any feminine products you may need as well as an extra pair of socks, shoelaces, underwear, shirt, and shorts. This should also travel to every tournament with you.

Parents/caregivers are always welcome to stay and watch practice, we have an open-door policy. Watching practice can give you another appreciation of how your athlete is working towards improving themselves. This is different than high school and you can get a real insight into how your daughter deals with adversity and all the skills that come with working as a team.

Model the Desired Behavior

You must model all behaviors you want your teammates to exhibit. This *Desired Behavior* is what you show everyone else around you from your parents, coaches and teammates to the other teams' parents, coaches and players. These include but are not limited to:

- Being on time – You should arrive 15 minutes before you are asked to be there. Arriving just in time or late sets a tone that this is not important enough for you to come on time.
- Your **ACTIONS** need to support your words. You will find that if you are not backing up what you say with your actions you will be losing the confidence of those around you.
- Stay Positive - This may be challenging at times but there is always something positive you can build on. How you win or lose a match (or work in practice) is more important than the win or loss itself.
- Be Prepared for Practice – Standing around wondering what to do next will convey the impression you did not do your homework.
- Be Adaptable - Sometimes there is a last second change in the number of teams at a facility, number of athletes that are attending, efficiency of a drill. Be able to change the drill or adapt to the situation so that you are practicing successfully.
- Respectful to others - This includes coaches, officials, parents and players, from ALL TEAMS. What you will remember most from this time of your life is not the wins or the losses but the relationships you formed, whether good or not so good.

Keep your Coach Informed

If you are going to miss a practice, the coach **needs to know**. The coach is building a practice with a certain number of athletes in mind. Some drills work better with more/less athletes and knowing the expected attendance will let the coach properly plan practices. While we love to hear from parents **the communication should come from the player**. This will help develop the athlete's commitment to the team as well as foster the growth and learning their team (and general life) responsibilities.

Drop-Off or Pick-Up from Practice

We want all athletes to arrive and leave practice safely and on time. While most of the athletes will not be driving themselves, we still feel it is the responsibility of the athlete to aid the parent/caregiver in making the transportation to and from practice as easy as possible.

- If the car needs to be cleaned of snow, or the driveway shoveled, the athlete should be, in the very least, helping in this process. If they are watching the parent/caregiver do all the work their sense of responsibility and commitment is weakened.

- If homework needs to be done the athlete must focus on getting this done. School and the athlete's continued education come before extracurricular sports. Learning to balance the work needed to do with sports and other events in life is something that players are never too young to learn.
- Please arrive for pick-up 10 minutes before the scheduled end of practice. Please be courteous to your coach/s that may have prior engagements, or their own family to take care of. Repeated tardiness in picking up your child may lead to additional fees for the coaches time.
- Carpooling is great! Once the season starts see if there are any other athletes in your area you can carpool with. Sharing the driving can help relieve the stress of having to be in multiple places at the same time. Make sure the schedule you set up is known by both the parents/caregivers and the athletes.

CHAPTER 4: TOURNAMENTS

NERVA Tournaments

NERVA includes teams from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine. In a large division with 100+ teams, it's easier to schedule tournaments among equal strength teams that are local to each team. But in a smaller division (such as 12U or 14U) there are fewer options. Being in Massachusetts, we've found that most tournaments are within one hour's drive, with 2.5 hours being the furthest, and sometimes they're at our home gym!

On any NERVA tournament date, there are over 70 tournaments happening at sites all over New England, with over 7000 players participating. Each tournament is confined to one age division, and could have anywhere from one to five courts, with typically four teams per court.

The NERVA coordinator uses many factors to schedule the tournaments. Obviously, the team's rank is a primary factor, as most teams want to play against other teams of similar strength. The coordinator first decides what age tournament will be at each site, making sure that the host club has at least one team in that tournament. Teams are then assigned to that site based on ranking and geography. This can be a difficult balance, because some smaller clubs (1-2 teams) are not able to travel, even if it means playing against teams of very different strength.

Because each tournament is designed to contain teams of similar strength, assignments can't be made until the previous tournament's results have been gathered and rankings computed. The coordinator must then go through the difficult process of scheduling each tournament site in the presence of multiple constraints. This is usually completed about a week after the previous tournament.

All teams compete in a minimum of 5 tournaments in the New England Region. For a team to be eligible for participation in the NE Regional Championships (this is the 5th tournament); a team must have participated in **at least three** of the four NERVA tournament dates. These tournaments can be anywhere in New England. Seeding for the Championship Tournament will be determined by finishes and points received at the NERVA season tournaments.

Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is required from all our athletes, parents/caregivers and family members at all times.

Those participating in our volleyball program reflect the dignity of the Pumas Volleyball Club, their parents/caregivers, their coaches and most of all, themselves. This is something that is not negotiable to us as coaches and an organization. Anyone displaying negative attitude and/or any conduct detrimental to the team will first be educated on a more positive way of dealing with their frustration or attitude. Continued negative conduct will be referred to the club director and may include dismissal from the club (with no refund).

All parents/caregivers (and athletes) are expected to demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship while representing Pumas Volleyball. Please cheer for our team's efforts and successes. Parents and other fans should never celebrate our opponents' mistakes. While in the gymnasium, keep all comments positive – remember, you are sitting among parents from the other clubs. Please do not compare the skill or attitude of your daughter out loud with other members of the team.

Volleyball officials are off-limits for parents/caregivers. This includes both the athletes that are reffing or any adult referee. **Refrain from yelling at the referees – before, during and after the match – no matter what the perceived error or injustice.** Pumas believes athletes must learn to perform under adversity, and to not waste emotion or effort on things not within their control. **There is no scenario** in which a parent or family member should approach a referee about a call that they made. If you have a problem with the way a match was officiated talk to your coach. Any parent or family member that is asked to leave a facility because of their behavior (usually yelling at the work team) will not be allowed into any Pumas facility for practice or tournaments for the remainder of the season.

Take the time to learn more about volleyball rules and strategy. What sometimes seems like a blown call or a poor coaching decision often looks much different if you have a more detailed appreciation for the nuances of this sometimes-complicated sport.

Any athlete, parent/caregiver, or family member that uses physical violence or intimidation towards any player, coach, tournament director or referee will be immediately dismissed from the club. That players name will also be forwarded to the regional commissioner which may result in expulsion from any future USAV clubs and events. The New England Region, and Pumas Volleyball Club, will enforce a zero-tolerance policy on unsportsmanlike behavior.

Team Personnel

Each team must have 6 players on the court during tournament play. At NERVA Open level tournaments you may **not** “borrow” players. For NERVA Club level tournaments, any set or match played without 6 players from your team is registered as a forfeit in the overall standings.

At NERVA Club level tournaments if a team is missing a player, the team can:

- A. “Borrow” a player from another team within their own program at the tournament. Any player that is “borrowed” from the same program must play with the new team for the entire day. The player must be designated on the roster. The player may return to their original team only when the new team is finished playing for the day. If the new team does not make the playoffs, the “borrowed” player may return to her original team for playoffs.

- B. If there is no player available from option “a.” then the work team of that particular match shall provide the needed player(s). The coach of the work team shall select the player(s).
- C. A team can also elect to play with a ghost player, but if a team has less than 6 players at the conclusion of pool play, they will not be eligible for playoffs.

All multi-day tournaments must have 6 players minimum from their own team. Borrowing is not allowed.

Uniforms

Official Pumas uniforms (shirt and short) are required for all tournaments. If an athlete forgets their uniform or brings a shirt from a past season with a different number, they will not be allowed to play. Socks and shoes do not need to match.

All uniform jerseys will be collected at the end of the season. Any jersey that is not returned will be billed to the player at a rate of \$75 per jersey. Players will be receiving two jerseys. Spandex or shorts will not be returned.

Officiating

At Open Level Tournaments adult head referees will be provided. The team that is working must provide all other officials, to include a down ref, scorekeeper, libero tracker, flip score or scoreboard scorer and 2 lines people. Coaches are required to monitor their work team at all times.

All Players must complete the online training for work team officials. This is free and can be accessed through your USAV membership and USAV Academy.

All Club Level, Tournament matches will be officiated by the athletes and NOT coaches, tournament directors or parents/caregivers.

To reduce distractions at the scorer’s table:

- Eating at the scoring table is discouraged.
- There should not be any extra players (your team or any other teams) hanging out or sitting at the scoring table that does not have a specific job.
 - This leads to distracting conversations that take the work teams focus off the job they are performing.
- No parents/caregivers or friends are allowed at the scorer’s table at any time. Please resist the urge to talk to your daughter during this time.
- **No electronic devices** of any kind (phone, iPad, iPod) are allowed at the scoring table.

Out of Region/Extra Tournaments

Your season fee covers the 5-single day NERVA tournaments and the multi-day Winterfest and Boston Sports Festival. There are no restrictions for your team entering in other competitions beyond the sanctioned NERVA Junior Tournaments (whether locally or nationally).

If you are a club team the cost of any extra tournament will be at your own team's expense. Hotel and travel fees are not covered by Pumas. The extra fee paid by Club players for tournaments will include coach's fees, coaches travel and hotel, and tournament registration. This will be set by the club director and the cost will depend on the number of players participating in that specific tournament.

Travel Policy for Pumas

Pumas has some teams that travel regularly to play in tournaments, has some teams where travel is limited to a few events per season, and some teams where there is no travel other than local travel to and from our own area. Pumas prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Volleyball SafeSport Handbook. Pumas has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of abuse or misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase player safety and improve the player's experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience. We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local tournaments ("local travel") and team travel involving an overnight stay ("team travel"). This travel policy has been adopted from the National USAV default travel policy and the NERVA travel policy.

Local Travel

Local travel occurs when Pumas does not sponsor, coordinate or arrange for travel.

- It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure the person transporting the minor player maintains the proper safety and legal requirements, including but not limited to: a valid driver's license, automobile liability insurance, a vehicle in safe working order, and compliance with applicable state laws.
- The employees, coaches and/or volunteers of a club or one of its teams, who are also not acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor.

Team Travel

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when Pumas or one of its teams or designees sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that the team can compete locally, regionally or nationally. There may be some instances, because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will travel with the players.

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent or relative of the player).
- At no time should only one adult be present in a room with minor players, regardless of gender.
- Individual meetings between a coach and a player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in public settings or with additional adults present, with at least one of those adults being the same gender as the player.

- The team will make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental requests when a child is away from home without a parent.
- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.
- Prior to any travel, Pumas or the team coaches will endeavor to make players and parents aware of all expectations and rules.
- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, then except where immediate action is necessary, parents will be notified before any action is taken, or immediately after.

The following policies are additional guidelines for the travel policy.

- Players are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Players are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, restaurant or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., players will stay in groups of no less than three persons. Athletes 12 and under will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- Additional guidelines may be established as needed by the coaches.
- Respect the privacy of each other.
- No room service without permission from the coach.
- Players are responsible for all incidental hotel or travel charges.
- Players are responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel or competition venue.

NERVA Tournament Host teams

Teams that are assigned as Host teams for NERVA tournaments have responsibilities that will need to be performed during set-up, during tournament play and after the tournament is over. Being a host team is a privilege. All teams must show up at their facility to set up all nets and work tables. This time will be set and sent out to coaches by the Pumas Tournament Coordinator.

During the day:

- All teams must make sure the facility is clean.
- If the tournament director needs help, he/she will look to the host team.
- The TD's do their best to let the girls play during the day but if there are net issues that need to be resolved the host team that is not playing will need to help the TD solve the problem.
- At the end of the tournament: If you are a host team and did not make playoffs your responsibilities may include:
 - Officiating for a team that may have traveled a distance
 - Officiating the finals
- Putting all equipment away and making sure the facility is clean.
- All players are expected to stay unless prior commitments have been discussed **before** the tournament. There should be no player/caregiver coming up to the coach after the team is finished playing saying they now have to leave.

Dispute Resolution - 24 Hour rule

If you are concerned about a non-emergency, volleyball-related playing issue that requires you to speak directly with a coach, we ask that you wait at least 24 hours after the triggering event. Cooler heads are inevitably more productive. We always enjoy talking with parents at the conclusion of matches but will not address non-emergency issues at that time. We also will not interrupt practice sessions as our court time is short and precious.

Playing Time:

Playing time is one of the biggest areas of discussion. For coaches, delegating playing time is a zero-balance exercise; the decision to give one player more time on the court means another player will get less. As such, all good coaches know that with each decision, however well-considered, comes the likelihood that someone will be disappointed.

Pumas does NOT guarantee playing time. Parents are paying club dues for their children to be well trained during practice, not for the right for equal play in tournaments. This is competitive volleyball, and we are in a competitive league. The expectations for each team are a little different, but the one thing that remains the same is no coach can guarantee equal playing time.

The Pumas Volleyball Coaches make the final decision on all playing time. Be aware that the quantity of players on the team, the player positions on a team, the type of offense and defense the coaches run, team chemistry, attendance at practice, general attitude at practice and tournaments, as well as other factors, can affect playing time for all players.

With these factors in mind, playing time is very important to us. It is important to apply the fundamentals and newly learned skills in a match situation. Players will receive a 'fair' amount of playing time, but we cannot guarantee an equal amount of playing time. The higher level of the team, the more competitive the playing time becomes. This is a fact when participating in sports. More playing time is earned by being at practice and working hard to improve, as well as executing the skills when given the opportunity to play. Parents should resist measuring their daughter's volleyball experience solely by the amount of her playing time. We strive to inject each player with a love for the sport, teaching her to value the opportunity to be part of a team, and to be strong and confident, whether in practice or a game.

1. All players will have equal opportunities to train and play during practice sessions. This is where the greatest advancements are made.
2. Athletes are NOT guaranteed equal playing time during tournaments and coaches will make playing time decisions based on what they think will bring success not just for each athlete but, to the team. Athletes will play in every match during pool play. If the team makes play-offs the coach will make every effort to play every athlete on the team for each play-off match.
3. Factors that can affect playing time are: attendance at practice, attitude and work ethic, leadership skills, team chemistry, statistical analysis, and performance during practices and matches.
4. Athletes on the bench must encourage and show their support for players on the court. Non-supportive attitudes, sulking, or any negative conduct is something that detracts from the team as a whole, and that individual athlete specifically.

If the player or parent/caregiver is unhappy with the player's role on the team the following procedure must take place. (THIS ONLY APPLIES TO ISSUES INVOLVING THE PLAYER'S ROLE ON THE TEAM, ANY OTHER COMMUNICATION IS INVITED AND GREATLY APPRECIATED!)

1. The **player only**, must schedule a meeting with the coach, outside of practice time (Before or after). This is a great opportunity for the player to learn too voice their questions or concerns away from the team. Pumas instructs the coaches to meet with the player first and not the parent.
2. If the player is not satisfied with the response from their coach, the player can schedule a meeting with the coach and their parent/caregiver. Both parent/caregiver and player must be at the meeting. **No meeting will be made without the player in attendance.**
3. If the player or parent/caregiver is still not satisfied, then the parent/caregiver may schedule a meeting with the coach and club director, again only with the player also present.

We care about the success of both the players and the team. Toward this end the coaches will do everything possible to accomplish both. However, please remember this is a team sport and playing time is earned in practice, not paid for by club dues. Every effort will be made to satisfy or address the concerns of the athlete. The athlete may not like the reply, but each concern will be addressed, and an explanation will be shared with the athlete.

As a staff we are more than happy to discuss your daughter with you. We will make ourselves available to meet with you. We will not, however, have a conference or conversation about another player for any reason.

CHAPTER 5: RULES AND SCOREKEEPING

Officiating Certification

Pumas has a reputation for excellence in officiating. We require that every player be certified in all officiating duties. Close to 40% of the time at tournaments is spent officiating. Knowing the rules and how to apply them leads to a greater understanding of the game by the player.

We strive for 100% certification for your officiating education. The score-keeping and work team certifications can be completed online in your USAV membership.

1. **USA Academy** – This is the latest method. You already have an account as it is connected to your USAV membership. Once the modules are completed, and the quizzes passed, this will show up on your USAV card.
 - a. This course takes approx. 1.5 to 2 hours to complete.
 - b. You may do one module at a time and go back to do the other modules at a different time/day. It will remember what you have completed. If you exit in the middle of a module it will bring you back to the start of that module.
 - c. Most modules have quizzes at the end you must pass with a 90% (9 out of 10 questions). If you do not pass you can keep taking the quiz until you do pass.
 - d. Some module you can test out of in the beginning of the module. You must get a 90% and you only get **one** attempt to test out for each module.

Those players that show aptitude and are recommended by their coach, or would like higher level work team training, Pumas will conduct an advanced clinic for all work team positions. The clinic date will be announced by mid-January.

CHAPTER 6: SAFETY

Our focus is the advancement of every player's skill level. Our most important responsibility is the **safety** of every player.

USAV + Coaches

1. The USAV requires all coaches to have a **National background check** and a minimum training of IMPACT and Safesport. This is unlike most other youth sport organizations.
 - a. The background screening policy for the USAV can be found at <http://nevolleyball.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-Background-Policy.pdf>
 - b. Did you know that 35% of the coaches that failed the USAV background check were allowed to coach AAU because they passed the AAU background check.
 - c. The USAV was one of the first organizations to require this starting in 2005.
2. The **IMPACT** course stands for the Increased Mastery and Professional Application of Coaching Theory. It is not a how to coach volleyball course, it is geared as a general coaching course. All USAV coaches must have this certification to be on the court.
3. The **SAFESPORT** certification is required by all coaches to be on the court or interact with the players.
 - a. SafeSport seeks to create a healthy, supportive environment for all participants. Through education, resources, and training, they help members of the sport community recognize, reduce, and respond to misconduct in sport.
 - b. This has been mandated for all USAV coaches since 2015 and now must be renewed every two years.
 - c. They have added a parent course. It is titled Parents Guide to Misconduct in Sport. Go to <https://safesport.org/training> and follow the directions on taking this free course. No USAV membership needed.
 - d. They are currently developing a player course. All designed to help the young players of today keep themselves safer.
4. Pumas follows the USAV Volleyball SAFESPORT policies for
 - a. Sexual Misconduct
 - b. Physical Misconduct
 - c. Emotional Misconduct
 - d. Bullying
 - e. Threats and Harassment (including Sexual Harassment)
 - f. Hazing

- g. Social Media
- h. Electronic Communication
- i. Travel policies.
- j. These policies can be found and downloaded at
https://www.volleyballreftraining.com/SafeSport/includes/2017_USAV_SafeSport_Handbook.pdf

First Aid Kit

Every team has a basic first aid kit that the coach will bring to practice and tournaments. It includes Band-Aids, instant ice bags, medical tape, gauze and antiseptic. Coaches will not administer any medications to any player (this includes aspirin and Tylenol). Any medications, over the counter or prescription, need to be brought by the player (or parent).

- **Band-Aids** – If you are a player that needs to use band aids just about every time you play please bring those with you. The ones in the kit are for unforeseen circumstances that has minor bleeding, not for continuous use.
- **Athletic Tape** – If you are taping any part of your body (fingers, ankles) you will need to have your own athletic take. Pumas does not provide athletic tape to be used for an injury.
- **Ice Packs** – These are to be used in an emergency. If an injury is serious enough to be using an ice pack it usually means you are done for the day (practice or tournament). Those players with chronic injuries (shoulder, ankles, knees) who use ice as a therapeutic treatment (not an emergency) should bring their own. A great tip is to carry 4-5 Ziploc sandwich bags, so you can fill them with snow for the time that cold therapy is needed, most of the time snow is readily available. Most facilities will not have ice on hand for athletes to use. We keep several Ziploc bags in our first aid kits as well.

Medical Forms

Every player submitted the USAV medical form at tryouts. If anything in the players medical history has changed, please fill out a new medical form and send to your coach.

Weather Cancellations

Very rarely does a practice or a tournament have to be cancelled. The facilities do a very good job of making their gyms accessible for us. However, there are several factors that will come into a coach's decision making:

- If players are driving themselves (mid-week, weekend practice, or tournament) and you feel the distance they will have to travel, the time of day they are traveling, and the present and future weather conditions may lead to too high a risk factor for those young drivers.
- If, because of conditions, you feel you personally cannot drive there safely.

Decisions to cancel are usually made at the last possible minute as the weather has a way of changing. If practice will be canceled the club director will help your coach decide a cutoff time to make the decision. Once the decision is made to cancel your coach will get in touch with each player/parent by voice, text, or email. Make sure you respond back with a confirmation about the cancelation.

These same principles are in effect for the coaches that are driving. If they feel they cannot safely get to and from the practice or tournament they will make that decision and contact you. There is no retribution for parents/caregivers or players that decide to not drive in inclement weather. Every driver has a different comfort and skill level in driving.

Ensure a Safe Playing Environment

When practicing, make sure that the nets + pads are installed properly, the court and surrounding area is free from debris and that no other obstructions will place any players at undue risk. This is a common-sense approach that is the teams' responsibility, not just the facilities. Walking on the court with wet shoes or leaving gym bags or trash near the court can lead to a higher risk of injury for everyone there.

Appropriate Volleyball Attire

1. It is recommended that players wear the proper footwear (volleyball shoes).
 - a. This will lower the risk of injury that could be caused by other types of footwear (slippers, boots, cross trainers, basketball shoes, running shoes, sneakers).
2. New for the 2019-20 season.
 - a. Jewelry may be worn provided its nature does not present a concern for safety, such as extremely long necklaces and/or necklaces with large medallions, or large hoop earrings.
 - i. This means it is at the discretion of the referee as to what constitutes a concern for safety, not the player, parent, or coach. (rule 4.5.1, p.31)
3. All braces should be properly padded.
 - a. Any knee, ankle, wrist or elbow braces that contain metal or hard plastic must be padded so it will not cause any injury to any player that may bump into them.
4. It is recommended that gum not be allowed during practice or tournaments.
 - a. This will reduce the choking hazard and also help keep our facilities cleaner.

CHAPTER 7: PUMAS TEAMS

The Team Comes First

As a Pumas volleyball player, you agree that the team is paramount. Your individual goals and your team's goals do not necessarily conflict, but when they do, you accept that decisions are made for the good of the team. Successes are sweeter – setbacks sting less – when they are shared.

Our Teams Thrive on Trust and Respect

Trust between your coaches and your teammates are important. You must behave in a way that earns their respect. You must do everything reasonably necessary to make yourself and your team better.

Our Athletes Learn to be Coachable

There is often more than one way to do things correctly. In some cases, however, your coaches will select a specific strategy for the benefit of the entire team, even if it may not seem to benefit a particular individual. You must be willing to make changes according to your coaches' suggestions. If coaches seem to be 'riding' you, it is usually because they think you are capable of a higher level of performance.

Our Teams Works Hard

Everyone wants to win, but few make the sacrifices to do it. No one will give you anything in life, you must earn it. You cannot cut corners. If, for example, you don't have a consistent, killer serve, you should work long and hard to get one. We meet once to twice a week for practice so the time we spend on the court is crucial. What athletes do outside of practice has a huge impact on how each athlete develops. If you are committed to increasing your skill level, are you training the other 5-6 days of the week mentally or physically?

Our Teams Help Teach Balance

To balance academics, athletics, work and family, you must plan ahead and may have to make difficult choices. The choices you make will affect your future opportunities. Choose wisely. This is a crucial time for athletes to learn how to balance their wants and desires with their needs and responsibilities.

On Our Teams, Bench Time is Playing Time

As a Pumas volleyball player, you maintain the same focus and enthusiasm whether you are between the lines or on the bench. You accept that playing time is decided by the coach for the good of the team, in the circumstances of the moment. Every player must be connected in the game at every moment and is ready to come in at any opportunity. Players who keep focused on the match while not on the court greatly increase their chances of success once they enter the game. Spirited bench players almost always infect their teammates with optimism and extra energy.

Our Teams Can Be Successful

Your coaches want you to know that almost any obstacle can be overcome with hard work. Commitment, perseverance and responsibility will be rewarded. Success is not always reflected in the outcome of the game. A team playing their worst against a weaker team may have won the game but have lowered their skill level. A team that has lost a game against a stronger opponent but played well has been successful at raising their skill level. We focus on playing one point at a time and taking a long-term approach to being successful as we want the athletes to be successful in the long run, not just for a short time.

Pass It On

As you move through high school, share your new skills and insights with new or younger players. Be generous with your time. Consider helping at the elementary school, instructional, or club level as an Jr Assistant coach with Pumas. When you have graduated high school consider being a club head or assistant coach, tournament director, or referee.