

Parents are being thrust into the middle of sports, both by choice and by decree. Parent meetings are common for school, but not for sports. The importance of working with the program from both sides cannot be overemphasized. Subjects here are focused on sport and personal development, hand in hand. We hope you can help the program in the varied functions required so the coaches can focus on coaching.

When we travel, or host events, we hope you think of the efforts going on at home and on the road to make this sport fit the needs of the athletes. As a visitor, be gracious to all, coaches, players and gym workers alike. The program you are visiting for a day or so must train and live at the site each and every year. The golden rule applies in volleyball gyms, not just church. We hope you will find it easy to do as you do, and not just as you say.

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

Few youth programs are successful without the support of parents. Below are a few guidelines which coaches can share with concerned parents as they strive to be supportive of their young athletes without being pushy. Thanks to the Rutgers Youth Sports research Council for help with these guidelines.

1. *Supportive parents focus on mastering sport skills and strategies rather than competitive ranking.* Sport mastery focuses on performance which can be controlled by the athlete, while competitive ranking focuses primarily on winning and losing, an outcome which is frequently outside the athlete's control. An overemphasis on competitive rank and an under-emphasis on sport mastery is a primary cause of dramatic dropout rate from competitive sports by 12 to 18 year olds.
2. *Supportive parents decrease the pressure to win.* Supportive parents realize that sport creates its own pressure to succeed. Additional pressure from the parent is likely to be counterproductive, particularly in the long run. Supportive parents avoid making the outcome of a game bigger than life. As a game or a competition becomes blown out of proportion, a youngster's self-esteem can become tied to winning or losing. A child should not feel less valuable or less loved when a match is lost.
3. *Supportive parents believe that sport's primary value is the opportunity for self-development.* The probability of achieving lasting fame and glory via sport is low. Many outstanding athletes never achieve professional status. However, their sports experiences have allowed them to develop life-long values and self-respect.
4. *Supportive parents understand the risks.* Competition places the athlete on center stage. Anytime you attempt to succeed publicly, you risk failing where others can judge you. In the long run, competing is a willingness to chance failure. Giving your best is what athletics is all about.
5. *Supportive parents communicate their true concerns directly with the coach.* A positive working relationship is based upon clearly communicated mutual goals among parents, coaches and athletes. While a parent cannot control the behavior of a coach, they can communicate with the coach on a regular basis about the overall development of their child.
6. *Supportive parents understand and respect the differences between parental roles and coaching roles.* Both parents and coaches need to understand their different roles in supporting the young athlete. While parents are ultimately responsible for their child's development, once they have chosen a coach, they must leave the coaching to the coach. Even though supportive parents often play sports with their child, they avoid coaching "over the shoulder" of the coach and/or publicly questioning coaching decisions.

7. *Supportive parents control negative emotions and think positively.* Few athletes wish to perform poorly. Negative reactions to poor performance only adds to an athlete's pressures. Supportive parents realize that even the athlete who "chokes" is trying to succeed. In fact, part of the problem with many athletes is that they are trying too hard to succeed. Criticizing such athletes does little to enhance their performance.
8. *Supportive parents avoid the use of fear.* The use of punishment and withdrawal of love can pressure kids to perform better. Unfortunately, such strategies tend to trade short-term performance gains for long-term emotional risks to the youngster's health and well-being. Supportive parents recognize that a love for sport is rarely fostered by fear of the consequences of failure.
9. *Supportive parents avoid criticizing.* Nagging parents often confuse support with constantly reminding the children that they need to practice, condition more and concentrate. Overly involved parents frequently lose their objectivity. They are unable to provide critical emotional support which children often need before and during highly competitive contests.
10. *Supportive parents recognize and understand expressions of insecurity.* Youngsters who express high anxiety, more often than not, have parents who are insensitive to their symptoms. When children are nervous, uncertain or feeling pressure, insensitive parents may trivialize the child's fears or see such concerns as signs of weakness. Supportive parents realize that such expressions are normal and are a call for emotional support.
11. *Supportive parents avoid the use of guilt.* "We've done so much for you," or "The family's given so much for you, the least you could do is take advantage of what we've provided for you" are typical remarks of unsupportive parents. They use guilt to manipulate the child to perform the way the parent's desire.
12. *Supportive parents show empathy for the young athlete.* Empathy is an understanding of what the child is feeling and an awareness of the pressures and demands that the sport places on the athlete. Empathy is not sympathy or agreement necessarily but rather a true understanding that the task is difficult. A sympathetic response to an expression of doubt by the athlete might be "Perhaps you're right. Perhaps it is too difficult. Maybe you shouldn't compete today." Empathy on the other hand, might be expressed by a supportive parent as "Yes, it will probably be a tough competition today. C'mon, let me help you get ready."

CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

Here are a few guidelines to help you see what parents' responsibilities are when they chaperone.

1. There is a midnight curfew. All athletes must be in their assigned room at this time. The athletes do not have to be asleep -- just in their rooms.
2. Athletes must let the chaperone know when they leave the hotel premises (to go to a restaurant, shop, etc.) and when they expect to return. Chaperons are responsible for knowing where "their" athletes are at all off-tournament sites.
3. Female players must be in parties of at least three. No one is to go by themselves or with just one other girl. Males should use the "buddy system".
4. The athletes know they are not to get into cars with strangers or with someone they know, unless permission is granted from the staff.
5. Of course, athletes will not be allowed to use cigarettes, alcohol or illegal drugs, nor participate in any other illegal actions.

NOTES:

PARENT HANDBOOK

A page listing all program staff members, a two-line sport biography and their phone numbers, should be included in your parent handbook. Your planned schedule should also be included. The following is a sample and may be copied in part or its entirety for Junior Olympic Volleyball program use.

Welcome to USA Volleyball Junior Olympic and Youth Volleyball

The purpose of this booklet is to familiarize parents and players with the Junior Olympic and Youth Volleyball Program. We hope that it will answer many of the questions you may have. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact any of the program's officers or the coach of your child's team. And if you wish to assist the program in ways other than those listed in the parent's questionnaire, please contact us as well.

USA Volleyball (USAV) is the national governing body, associated with the U.S. Olympic Committee and is responsible for local, regional, national and international volleyball competition. USA Volleyball has divided the nation into 35 regions, whose top teams compete in Men's, Women's, and co-ed national open championships, as well as in championships for Senior Men and Women (30 years old and over), Masters Men and Women (35 and over) and Men's Golden Masters (45 and over). It is the sponsor of the year-round men's and women's national teams training programs.

For younger players, USA Volleyball sponsors teams that participate in the High Performance pipeline for both Indoor and Beach, international junior competition and Junior Olympic Volleyball, including the U.S. Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships.

As a Junior Olympic volleyball program, we are committed to providing quality physical and psychological training and competition -- locally, regionally and nationally. This competitive athletic experience can enhance social development, contribute to mental and physical health, and teach the values of teamwork, responsibility, self-discipline and self-motivation. The program has grown each year, limited only by a lack of indoor training sites, and at other times, coaches. As we seek to promote and develop youth volleyball in the community, we do not register players based on their merit as players, but rather on their interest and enthusiasm for the sport.

What rules we have are strictly enforced, otherwise the JOV program would collapse in exceptions. Players in the program come from many different schools and must therefore eliminate any cross-town jealousies and work together as a team. Our program is dedicated to giving all members the chance to improve the many unique skills found in this vital and original American sport. We sincerely hope that by teaching its fundamentals, Junior Olympic volleyball programs will provide the solid foundation that will enable young people to play volleyball not just in school, but long into adulthood. This is in keeping with our contention that volleyball is truly a lifetime sport.

It cannot be overemphasized that a Junior Olympic volleyball program requires commitment. We expect any player considering participation to discuss the matter with parents as well as other advisers. The entire program involves a great deal of time, effort, and financial resources. Program developers need to maximize their efforts by seeking athletes who will participate fully. At the same time, students' high school commitments must not violate the student-athlete status of anyone in the program.

Registration and Eligibility

The Youth Volleyball Program is open for boys and girls 7-10 years old. The Junior Olympic Volleyball program has single age group divisions; 14 and under, 15's, 16's, 17's, and 18 and under. All participants are grouped by age as of September 1 of the national championship year. All 14 and unders must be in eighth grade or lower, 16 and unders need to be in 10th grade or below, and 18 and under must be in high school.

Registration is held annually at a place and time designated each year. Separate registration is held for JOV and Youth volleyball. This information will be available through the program newsletter, local papers, high

school and junior high coaches, and by calling any program officer. Absolutely no refunds are given, except for medical reasons, so please take this into account when registering your child.

Program Requirements

Program requirements include maintaining a 2.0 grade point average, practice and tournament participation, fundraising activities and officiating. Our program adheres to all State High School Activities Association rules and regulations, which accounts for the fact that certain coaches may not be able to coach your child.

Time Commitment

The season runs from January through June, possibly July. Players will be expected to make a commitment to attend practices and competition as scheduled by the coaching staff. Practice and competition schedules for the season will be sent to each participant. It is hoped that by having advanced information of the schedule that conflicts can be kept to a minimum. Your support in this area will make the program more beneficial for your child and will be important to the team's improvement. While each team may have a different schedule, each participant will practice at least two times per week, usually in the evening during the week or once on the weekend. Competitions are always on the weekend and will take place about two times per month.

By the end of the Junior Olympic volleyball regional competition in late May to early June, it is hoped that teams from one or more age divisions will have qualified for a chance to compete in the U.S. Junior Olympic Volleyball Championships or USAV Invitational that are held in the summer throughout the United States. The program coaches will select players for positions on these teams, based on season performance and participation.

Financial Commitment

Each participant will pay a membership fee when he/she begins participation. Each team will determine a season's budget which will determine the exact cost per participant. Various expense factors and the level of fundraising, through events, yearbook sales and such, will affect this cost to a great degree, but it will be well over \$300 for all levels, plus travel. A complete explanation of the financial commitment will be available for your information. The fees will cover the cost of equipment (uniforms, shoes and knee pads), USAV membership fees, tournament entry fees, insurance and coaches' stipends, gym rentals and other such costs of participating.

The following forms need to be filled out in order to participate:

- **Player Questionnaire** - This provides your coach with some valuable information to help make sure that each player's individuality is taken into account.
- **Medical History and Consent** - This form will travel with the team on all trips and is kept with the training kit for in-town situations.
- **Parent Questionnaires** - This form tells each coach what kind of support to expect from the parents of his or her team. It is important that you fill it out. If you can help us with housing, please also fill out the map and information form so we can send it to the out of town visiting team.
- **Principal Permission** - This form is needed only by high school students who are playing in another sport for their school in the spring in certain areas.
- **Grade Check** - This sheet will be needed by the coach whenever mid-semester or quarter grades are issued.

Team Selection

After registration of all new and returning players, each age division will have group workouts to select teams. Experience, skill, transportation and geography are all factors that are considered in forming balanced teams. Every year teams are grouped to maintain balance. Car pooling to practice is desired since only the oldest age division can drive. You will have a list of those players on your child's team to help you in your efforts to "share the ride." All players will be contacted by their coach with information about the current team practice site, date and time.

Uniforms and Equipment

The program will provide your child with a long sleeve, numbered and logo-marked uniform top. Shorts, kneepads, hooded sweatshirt and sweatpants are options for certain teams. Youth members receive only a t-shirt. Players must provide their own court shoes. It should be noted that running shoes are not recommended, as they are not designed for the action of volleyball. Please review care instructions which are on the uniform labels. Proper dress for practice includes shorts, kneepads, and if possible, a long sleeve t-shirt. A player cannot wear jewelry, watches or any other hard object, including a plaster cast or splint. Absolutely no gum chewing is allowed.

The program supplies volleyballs, net system, water bottles, athletic training kit, refereeing and scorekeeping clinics, and videotaping. JOV players will also receive a USA Volleyball membership card, a year's subscription to *Volleyball USA*, regional newsletters, and much more. Athletic tape will be provided only to those who use it on an infrequent basis; regular users of tape must supply their own, or reimburse the program on a monthly basis for tape costs.

Practice Information and Rules

Youth teams practice in the afternoons for about an hour. JOV team practice will be on weeknights, for about two hours each session. The team practices two to three nights a week. It is important that the players attend practice, as that is where individual and team skills and strategies are taught. Coaches should see that the younger players have made arrangements to get home safely; providing transportation. However, it is not the coach's responsibility. Players should make every effort to respect the facilities that have been obtained, and are to make sure that the gyms and locker rooms are cleaner than when they arrived. Misuse of the facilities should be brought to the attention of the coaches. Additional training sites are needed, if you have any help in this regard.

Tournament Information

The program relies on the help of parents and the oldest division to enable it to participate in USA Volleyball regional Junior Olympic volleyball competition. We need transportation help for all out-of-town events. Youth Volleyball competition is staged locally, primarily as part of practice sessions. Fundamental skill development, accomplished through many contacts with the ball, is the main focus for younger players.

USAV JOV competition is generally held on a Saturday or Sunday (all-day tournaments). The round-robin pool play begins about 8:30 a.m., single-elimination play for the top finishers begins in the late afternoon and finals are in the early evening. Updated schedules for this season's competition are made available through the newsletter and from each coach. Final confirmation for the tourney entry can come as late as three days before the event. When we have in-town events, your help is requested in providing one or two nights' lodging for out-of-town players.

Travel

Youth teams will not travel out-of-town, though we will have the chance to travel in town to play other youth teams. JOV tournaments that are at locations more than several hours away require departure one day before the event, in the afternoon. Lodging is most often provided by helpful families either those friends identified by our programs participants or the Junior Olympic volleyball programs found in the cities in or near the competition. Sleeping bags are needed for such an overnight "slumber party." The coach will have the phone numbers of places where each team is to stay, whether it be a family home or a motel. Motel costs dictate that we first get the help of friends of volleyball when seeking lodging. Only food costs need to be covered by each player, when traveling with the team.

In addition to helping with housing, parents and vehicles are needed to provide help with transportation to as many out-of-town tournaments as possible. The program will reimburse the gasoline costs of any parent or athlete driving to a regional tournament; vehicle size does not matter, although vans are desired. When inclement weather threatens a trip, the decision to travel will be made by the director, who will notify the head coaches of each traveling team by noon on departure day.

Every effort to attend the tournaments will be made, but travel safety will not be compromised, even if the trip must be cancelled. Since each coach must enter his or her team several weeks prior to the event, as soon as you have the season's master schedule, tell your coach of any tournament that you cannot attend. We understand that unforeseen situations can arise, such as illness that will prevent your child from playing in a tournament. Please make every effort to inform the coach as soon as possible. Although an estimated time of arrival will be given for each tournament, teams will stop an hour or so out of town in order to call and arrange for transportation to meet the squad at the pre-arranged pick-up spot.

Collegiate Volleyball Hopefuls

It is expected that the majority of the players in the program will hope to participate in volleyball throughout their collegiate years. Junior volleyball experience is becoming a must in order to compete intercollegiately, particularly for those hoping to earn an athletic scholarship. Our program will assist any participant in making their collegiate volleyball decisions. Information on the entire recruiting process is available. It includes suggestions in making videotapes and guidelines for making initial contacts with coaches.

The most important assistance will be in helping the individual to make a realistic choice to increase their chances to be able to play on a collegiate squad. There will be no attempt to influence the player's decision towards a particular school at any time. Assistance, including letters of recommendation, will only be given upon request.

Every effort will be made by the staff of Junior Olympic volleyball programs to assist athletes who need and want help in locating and getting scholarships at collegiate institutions that offer good volleyball and appropriate sound programs.

Sponsors

Please take a moment to thank your sponsors. When possible, return the favor by doing business with them!

Communicate with Us

It cannot be overemphasized that the program is for the players. Nonetheless, if ANY parent wants to get more involved than driving to and from practice, GIVE US A CALL or EMAIL US! Emphasis is placed on the organization's objectives of good sportsmanship, teamwork, self-control and having a good time. Since winning is out of a player's control in volleyball, performance and improvement should be the focus.

Uniqueness of the Game

As team sports go, volleyball is one of the most intensely team-conscious. Teams consist of six players who are, at the same time, unique in their individual capabilities and yet single-minded in their combined delivery of six fundamental skills.

Errors end nearly every play, even though no one is trying to make a mistake. The team and individual performances will improve if players can be made to realize that no one is trying to shank a ball or serve into the net. If players express their hopeful anticipation, instead of focusing on a preceding error, they will both support and relax their teammates for the upcoming play. Every contact can be improved. Such determination is the key to good team play. Each player must always be moving to a better position for the ball, "bettering the ball," and communicating with teammates. The goal is simply to have each person playing his or her individual best in every rally, no matter what the outcome.

Volleyball can teach many good traits, such as a spirit of cooperation, respect for law and order, and a regard for physical fitness. But it is difficult for these and other desirable traits to take root in young players when the adults around them fail to set the right example. We ask that the parents refrain from criticizing the opposing players, other parents or a teammate of their own child. Remain seated and respectful in the spectator area.

Relax and Let Them Play

In our spectator enthusiasm we are often prone to issue several instructions to the players that are even contrary to those of the coach, much to the confusion of the players. Please let the athletes follow the bouncing ball to the best of their ability and leave what coaching is needed -- to the coach. This is not intended to squelch spectator enthusiasm. Please do cheer and encourage the actions you like and ignore the mistakes you surely will see. Please do not interfere with you child's coach, especially during play, or do anything else that will detract from the enjoyment your child deserves to get from volleyball.

The referees, like all USAV staff, are all volunteers. Every contact made by each team must be judged; an official's decision may not be agreeable to all participants and spectators, but the decision is final. No useful purpose is served by stating disagreement or shouting derogatory remarks, nor do such actions teach respect for authority.

The referee can caution players and coaches with a yellow card, award an opponent points with a red card, eject players or coaches with a red and yellow card, and even end the match. Abusive words towards the opponents or official can result in these actions. At this skill level, the referees are supposed to allow learning and volleying to take place, errors that at a higher skill level might be whistled at. Thus small errors in attempts to play the ball with the proper technique are commonly overlooked.

Insurance Coverage

The program provides team protection on an excess coverage basis for members participating in scheduled, supervised and approved activities (practice sessions, games, fundraising campaigns, and attendance as spectators at major volleyball events). Travel with a supervised group of team members directly to and from these activities is also covered. If a player has sustained an injury in practice or a game, the coach should be

alerted as soon as possible. If an injury appears serious enough to require a doctor, medical care should be sought immediately. Parents should make a claim of medical bills to their family medical coverage or through their employer's group policy. Whenever medical expenses associated with the injury are not covered because of a deductible clause, parents should obtain a statement of claim form and claims instruction sheet from the coach. Please check the completed form for accuracy and completeness (failure to complete the claim form properly may result in processing delays) and return it to the coach. He or she will see to it that it is delivered to the insurance carrier.

Game Rules

- Each JOV team consists of three front row and three back row players. Youth teams usually consist of three players, with no front or back row designation. A team rotates after earning a sideout.
- Only the three front row players may attack the ball; however, all six players may replay the ball from below the height of the net.
- Each team is allowed up to three contacts (a touch on the block is not counted) before having to return the ball to the opponent's court.
- The first team to reach 25 points by a two-point margin wins the game, when every serve counts as a point
- No one can touch the net when the ball is alive.
- The primary ball-handling rules are that the ball cannot be double-hit (except on each team's first touch) or visibly come to rest. A first touch with a setting action can never be double hit.
- The standard court is nine x nine meters a side. Two youth courts are placed on one standard court. For JOV boys the net is 2.43 meters; for JOV girls, 2.24 meters; and for youth, either 1.85 meters or 2.24 meters (younger players use a higher net to promote rallies).

PARTICIPATION BENEFITS

The program provides a great number of opportunities for its members ... travel ... potential scholarships ... personal development, not just skills ... coaches who care and who are being improved themselves ... High Performance participation ... summer camp information ... many of the benefits come in personal development (self-discipline, skill improvement and physical conditioning).

Other items include...

- ...USAV Junior registration and card
- ...Own uniform - jersey and shorts w/logos
- ...*Volleyball USA* - USAV magazine
- ...Monthly program newsletter
- ...Player handbook
- ...USAV regional newsletter
- ...Special medical insurance
- ...\$1,000,000 liability insurance
- ...Videotaping - for skill development and recruitment
- ...Officiating clinic
- ...Quality training and competition

Parent Program Administration

- Help secure facilities
- Help with player recruitment
- Help with recruitment of coaches

- Host out of town coaches and teams
- Provide travel assistance to all tournaments
- Deliver high school coaches to program organizational meeting
- Attend team organizational, season planning and evaluation meetings
- Work with team coach and parents to refine and adapt program guidelines to the unique needs of the team.

Parent Financial Support

- Pay dues and competition costs on time
- Help plan and coordinate fund raisers
- Solicit corporate support for program
- Work with team coach on player's collegiate aspirations and recruitment

Parent Community Relations

- Report player progress to high school coaches
- Arrange for team and action photos
- Report team news to local media

JUNIOR OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The parents are a very important part of all USAV programs, and not just because you give the players room, board and transportation. Such programs simply could not operate without your cooperation and support! Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below to let us know how you believe you can help support this Junior Olympic Volleyball program and its athletes. Please understand that we want you to assist the program only in areas that you feel competent and comfortable. Fill in or circle one or more of the appropriate responses.

THANKS!

NAME _____

Athletes Name _____

PHONE _____ H _____ W _____

1. Could you provide one or two nights lodging for Junior Olympic Volleyball players visiting your city for competition against the your team; if so, how many players could you enjoyably house?

NO YES Number of Players -- 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, any number

2. Do you have any relatives or close personal friends that we could, without risking the relationship, ask to help us by housing some of our athletes and staff for a night or two during a tournament in any of the following cities?

(1) (2)
(3) (4)
(5) (6)
(7) (8)

3. Do you have relatives or close personal friends that we could ask to house some of our program members from 5 to 7 days during national junior competition in any of the following areas?

4. Do you know anyone in the hotel/motel or restaurant business that might be willing to assist our program's athletes and staff during competition in any of the following cities?

5. Would you be willing to lend a motor vehicle to help transport (round trip and without the likelihood of breaking down!) program members to competition in any of the cities named above?

NO YES City #s _____ Car Model _____

6. Would you be willing to drive to any of the cities named in #2 and act as a chaperon?

NO YES City #s _____ Car Model _____

YES - In a rental vehicle to city
#s _____

7. Please list any participation in the sport itself for you and your spouse.

8. We always need such items as ball tubes to be sewn for the program. If we paid for the expense would you be willing to buy the materials and make these needed items?

9. We have a list of private individuals who are capable of making helpful contributions to our program now and in the future. Do you personally know any such individuals who belong on this list? If so, please name them below, along with their address and phone number, if possible.

10. Corporations can be a valuable source of financial support for our activities. If you have such contacts that you believe we should contact, please write below their name and that of the corporation's key contact.

11. Do you have any fundraising suggestions besides a car wash or bake sale that we should try?
 NO YES!
 This should raise about \$_____ in _____day(s).

12. Several tournaments will require the team to stay overnight. The athletes will be staying in groups in other volleyball families' homes. Do you foresee any problems with this as parents or for your child?

Parent Involvement

There is no required involvement by the parents, but you are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in any way you would like. You will be kept fully informed of the team's activities and will be given the opportunity to assist in the above areas we have questioned you about. We would love to have your assistance, as we rely on parents to perform functions so the coaches can focus on coaching. For additional information, please feel free to call the director who would like to have any comments that you might have, past, present or future.

Parent's Signature

JUNIOR OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL LOCAL HOUSING

We need help this year in housing volleyball folk for our big tournament. They would just need to stay, not be fed. If you can help us, even if you do not have a player in the program, the volleyball world would appreciate it.

We can house...

___ An entire or part of a team for the _____ tournament

___ We'd also be interested in helping out during the tournaments!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE (____) _____ WORK PHONE (____) _____

Athlete's name _____ Age group _____

No. of floor spaces available _____ No. beds for coaches _____

No. of bathrooms available in the morning _____

Description of house/apartment (color, 1-2 story, etc.):

Written directions to house:

Maps to both home and gym:

VOLLEYBALL CAMP SELECTION

Many players would benefit from attending a summer volleyball camp. These are generally fun and a chance to learn a great deal in an intense, brief time. For those attending out of shape, the second and third day of camp can seem to be too long but such muscle pain passes and by the final days, you'll wish camp wouldn't stop.

The problem is that in your first camp, where you train two to three times a day (usually after never practicing more than two hours a day ever), you think you learn a great amount. You do learn in any camp, for you are touching the volleyball, rather than watching television or doing yard work. It is just that the best camps give you so much better training. Once you go to a good camp you'll understand what the difference is. Unless or until you experience this difference, you'll never know what you really could learn in camp.

These better camps generally are "full service" camps. Your day is filled with volleyball, from morning to night. Local camps that provide one or two workouts a day are certainly helpful, but this full day environment is the most rewarding. Full days can be long days, but when everyone around you shares the joy and desire of learning this great sport, the days and nights are full of special, fun learning moments. The chance to eat with an all-America, or ask questions while in the lounge watching a volleyball movie after practice really adds to the camp experience.

Other camps exist on a "night session" basis (five nights a week rather than a class of one or two times a week) in certain USAV regions. USA Volleyball regional commissioner in your area should know of these camps. USA Volleyball may also offer a full day of coaching some weekends, where any individual may attend.

The Coaches are the Key

The coaches and the drills you do are what makes or breaks a camp. It doesn't matter how "great" the head coach might be, for you'll never get too many moments with this person. What is important is how that coach has organized the camp. You should be grouped at the start by a skill test or some method so you are training with those skilled nearly equal to yours. Don't worry about being placed at the top; just make sure you get together with players of about your own skill level.

There are some special camps organized for "elite" players. Others are "specialist" camps where you are trained with a higher emphasis on a particular skill, such as setting or spiking, although you'll still certainly need to work on all your skills. Hopefully you won't be doing any back and forth, against the wall, or pair drills as camp, like any real practice, should be that chance to develop your abilities and experience in the angles of the game.

Get the Attention you Deserve

The ratio of campers to coaches should never be more than 14:1, ideally 12:1, and each such group *must* have their own entire court. Camps which place your group on half a court, or have you "sharing" a court with another group (same difference) are cheating you from learning the whole game.

What is equally important is who your own coach is. The best camps bring in coaches who are from outside the area or out-of-state. Beware not to confuse players with coaches. At some camps you are "coached" by players, who have never really explained to themselves, let alone anyone else, how to play volleyball. Find out if all the coaches have coached before, especially at camps. Teaching you at a camp is very different than coaching a team for a season. After four to six days, you'll leave camp and may never see that coach again. If the camp has a head coach, whose job is to help train these novice coaches, then you are probably safe. If there is no head coach to help develop these novice coaches, you will be the trial and error training ground for such a player's entry into coaching. That's fine for those later, but you sure could do better.

Other Key Services

There are also other important services. These would include the minimum of a full-time athletic trainer, meal services near the training site and lodging with other campers and chaperons close to the training site. The better camps also provide mostly indoor courts. Playing outside enables a camp to have more campers, but weather is not what any indoor player must learn about. Training can be hard enough indoors. By adding wind, rain and sun may get you a tan, but also can be trouble. You sure don't want to hear the old line "Gee, you should have been here last week, it was beautiful..." There are good camps with outdoor courts, but indoor courts are preferred.

A swimming pool will help take away some of your muscle soreness and provide a diversion from all the court action. Film sessions of the Olympics and other audiovisual training aids are a plus. A camp manual for each player is a very good indicator that the camp is looking at ways to help you even after the camp is over. Getting a camp t-shirt or photo shouldn't be any big deal, such items don't help you play better. All that might do is serve to remind you of what a lousy learning experience it was!

Beware of camps that make you condition while you train. Certainly a warm-up is needed, as are drills that will challenge you. However, camp is not the place to condition, but the place for SKILL learning. You'll get sore and in shape from just doing the many hours of skill training every day. If you learn of a camp that warms you up for long periods of time (the only time you need long warm-ups are on the mornings of those "sore" second and third days) or runs you often, beware. Your running and getting in shape should be done before you get to camp, not at camp.

The "Camp Appraisal Work Sheet" can be used to help make educated decisions between camps that you might attend.

NOTES:

CAMP APPRAISAL WORK SHEET

Camp _____
Location _____
Dates _____

Use one work sheet for each camp. List or circle appropriate choice for each question on the left side of the page, then overlay camp sheets so only the figures show. Make up your own master sheet of pluses and minuses for all camps to get the highest rankings. Then determine if it is a match for your child at this stage of his or her development.

1. Number of days in the session?
2. Number of actual training hours?
3. Number of campers expected?
4. Accident insurance supplied?
5. Liability insurance supplied?
6. Athletic trainer on staff?
7. Video taping of individual players provided?
8. Player skill manual provided?
9. Special college recruiting help if desired?
10. Campers per coach ratio?
11. Balls per camper ratio?
12. New or used volleyballs on the court?
13. Camper per court ratio?
14. Indoor or outdoor courts?
15. Camp store for volleyball specific purchases?

- 16. Daily camp newsletter?
- 17. Pool available?
- 18. Concurrent coaching clinic available?
- 19. Coaches Accreditation Program available?
- 20. Percentage of staff who are coaches, not collegiate players?
- 21. Cost of camp?

22. Cost of round-trip travel?

- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 1. Probable competence of directing staff.
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 2. Probable competence of court coaches.
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 3. Local or imported staff.
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 4. Probable number and diversity of staff.
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 5. A full service camp?
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 6. Probable level of support for local program.
- 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 7. Overall assessment.

Profile the range of player for which this camp is a match

Class:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1-Junior High | 2-Freshman |
| 3-Sophomore | 4-Junior |
| 5-Senior | |

Skill:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1-Beginner | 2-Freshman starter |
| 3-Junior varsity starter | 4-Varsity starter |
| 5-All conference elite player | |

Player commitment desirable:

1-2-3-4-5

Player independence and self-reliance necessary:

1-2-3-4-5

Other special items worth noting from the information brochure:

Resources:

Staff:

Other:

THE PARENT/COACH/PLAYER TRIAD

Thanks to Dr. Dave and Bernice Epperson and the Volleyball Festival staff.

There is nothing more destructive to a volleyball program than doubt. The player who begins doubting his/herself often self destructs on the court. They shank passes, mistimed hits and blocks, serve into the net, mishandle sets and are slow to release on defense. Frequently, they get caught in a downward spiral where they make a mistake that provokes a loss of confidence that creates more tensions which produces yet another mistake. (While the problem manifests itself in the performance of basic volleyball skills, it is created, nurtured and supported in relationships between the player, the coach, teammates and parents).

Coaches and parents are clearly in positions where they can take actions which either create or "exorcise" doubt. They can establish a climate of support that will greatly reduce the prospects of failures caused by lack of confidence. On the other hand, they are also in positions to be major contributors of doubt. When parents manifest doubt in either their child's ability to perform or in the coaches' ability to lead, destructive tension is added to the team's interpersonal system. Additional tension is created when coaches communicate a lack of confidence in either their player's ability to learn or express doubt in a family's ability to provide mature guidance for their child.

We are all too familiar with ugly cases where parents have taken exception to a coach's decisions and have confronted the coach in ways that undermine the player's confidence in his/her leadership. We have also witnessed coaches who have taken actions that demonstrate a total lack of respect for the legitimate concerns of players or their families. Stories of gross misconduct by "pushy" parents and by uncompromising, ambitious coaches are a part of both the folklore and reality of sports in America.

While it is acknowledged that doubt can also be created and transmitted from a team member, the focus of this paper will be on coach, player, parent relationships or what will be referred to as the *instructional triad*. Clearly the possibility of players infecting one another with doubt is very real and needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating ways of orchestrating the social environment in the service of team growth and development.

What can be done to create interpersonal support systems that minimize the cancer of doubt in a volleyball team's interpersonal system?

First of all, it is important to recognize the critical role of each actor in the drama. Many coaches would like to believe that parents have no meaningful place in the volleyball community, that they should absent themselves and not contaminate the situation with their "intrusion." That position is unrealistic. However, since even if coaches were successful in physically excluding parents from practices and competitions, the parents remain in the hearts and minds of all players. Parents are critical in formulating goals and standards of excellence. Without a strong parental influence it is impossible for young athletes to develop high motivation to achieve. Because there is so little general cultural support for women-as-athletes, parents play an essential role in supporting them in this non-traditional activity.

Furthermore, it is important for parents to understand that if their child's coach is being challenged at each turn he or she will be unable to develop the confidence essential to provide mature leadership for their children. Unless they are accorded the respect provided other experts, it is unlikely they will be able to deliver effective educational services. This is not to say that there are not outrageous parents who are too emotionally involved in their child's achievements to respond constructively. Nor is it to say that there are not emotionally crippled coaches who abuse players in the service of their egos. For, indeed, there are both.

It is probably true that in an emerging sport, such as volleyball, where the standards of conduct for parents and coaches are not yet clearly defined, there are bound to be cases where the maturity and sophistication of the various actors leave much to be desired. Because of the ambiguity of standards in the development of the sport, volleyball may be in a position to shape its own traditions and break away from the excesses observed in other sports. While it will be impossible to entirely eliminate these excesses, it is possible that volleyball can lead the way in developing effective working relationships between coaches, players and parents.

It is important at this point to indicate that the nature of coach-parent relationships changes in significant ways as the child progresses up the volleyball training ladder. When the child is being introduced to volleyball in junior high school the expectations of parents and coaches are different than they will be when the child enters a serious high school program. The expectations change again when the child is selected to an elite club training team. And when a player enters a collegiate scholarship program the nature of the expectations change once again.

In the latter case, the player is, crassly put, an *employee* of the university with the coach as his/her "boss." If a player reaches the national team level, coach-parent relationships can effect player commitment, confidence and performance. While the centrality of the various issues may change from level to level, they are all present in one form or another throughout the entire developmental sequence.

As a first step in creating a *doubt inhibiting environment* for learning, it is important to help each member of the support team, coaches and parents, better understand one another. While there are many shared features of their perspectives on sports, there are also many differences. It is these differences which serve as a significant challenge in establishing a climate of mutual support.

COMMON CONCERNS OF COACHES AND PARENTS

What are the most common parental concerns?

Clearly the most common parental challenge to coaches focuses on the issue of playing time. If a player is investing in serious training and is unable to earn a significant role on the team, parents at all levels begin to question whether the commitment in time, money and effort is worth it. Tension arises in the coach, player and parent triad when this circumstance arises. Stories of parents aroused to violence or near violence when they feel that their children are being undervalued are well known to all veterans of youth sports. Volleyball is no exception.

Even though parents typically have less investment in their daughter's than in their son's athletic development, they are frequently offended that their daughter's talent is not being recognized and utilized. This is especially true in club volleyball where the parents are making a *direct* financial contribution to their daughter's training. When they are making a direct payment (rather than through taxes) they feel that they have a right to get a share of playing time.

The second concern that creates tension in coach-parent relations is the training and competition schedule. Most coaches make every effort to schedule as many training sessions as possible during their season. Often, little consideration is given to how the training schedule fits in with the player's other commitments. When training time intrudes into time parents feel ought to be assigned to academics, family life or employment, tension in the interpersonal system (the coach, player, parent triad) can arise and have damaging effects and player performance.

Another tension producing situation arises when a parent learns of coaching behavior that discounts their child's efforts or achievements and hence diminishes their daughter's self esteem. At times, coaches are alleged to have psychologically or physically abused a player. What actually constitutes abuse is not the issue here. What is important is that the child perceives that

he/she has been diminished by the experience and hence has lost confidence in herself and in the coaches' judgment. Parents generally respond quite vigorously to these types of reports from their children. Even when parents acknowledge the importance of putting their children in situations where they develop "mental toughness," it is difficult for them not to be effected by her disaffection.

Another point of tension arises when coaches do not present a model of a mature adult committed to traditional values. Most parents expect coaches to behave in an exemplary fashion, both on and off the court. When parents see coaches ranting and raving on the sidelines, abusing officials, hear of them drinking or having sex with a player, cursing players or officials or any other less than perfect conduct, they lose confidence in the coach's ability to serve as a model. When a coach departs from conventional professional behavior, parents often plant the seeds of doubt in the minds of their children, which hence affects volleyball performance.

Also, tension enters the coach-parent relationship when the parent feels their child's health or safety is being jeopardized. If a coach expects a player to play sick or injured, parents can lose confidence in the coach's professional competency and begin to feel that the coach is more interested in his/her career advancement than in the growth and development of their child. In addition, coaches who fail to show genuine concern for the child's safety and well-being when the team travels also lose parent confidence. Safety is always a pre-eminent issue for parents.

Finally, coaches who make obvious coaching errors (i.e. receive penalty points) contribute to a parent's lack of confidence. Of course, these judgments on the part of parents are often based upon questionable understanding of the game. Nevertheless, when there are apparent coaching errors, parents are quick to express doubt in the coaches' ability to lead. When this type of doubt enters the *instructional triad*, it is like a "glitch" in a system that disrupts the performance of all concerned. Most 15-0 games can be understood as triumphs of doubt. It is important that steps be taken to reduce the lack of confidence on the part of any team member of the triad lest an epidemic occur. Not only does coaching behavior provoke doubt but the conduct of parents can also be disruptive to the system.

What are the most common concerns of coaches?

Clearly, when parents presume to know more than the coach and try to tell him/her how to do his job, as some parents are prone to do, it represents a clear expression of doubt.

Doubt can also be created when a parent gets involved in coaching his/her own child outside the training environment. It is less disruptive when the parent follows the coach's prescription of training than when he/she attempts to teach points that are not a part of the coach's scheme of things. In both cases, parents run the risk of communicating a lack of trust in the coach's ability to do his/her job. This is not to suggest that parents should not become active in training their children. The point is parent involvement risks threatening the coach's authority unless it is done in close collaboration with him/her.

Coaches begin to doubt whether their efforts and sacrifices are worth it when parents hold their children out of training or competition in order to participate in family outings or school related non-volleyball events. Every coach feels that he deserves a high position in the player's priority system. When parents take actions that diminish the importance of the volleyball activity in the child's life, doubt creeps onto the scene. Another action which inserts doubt into the system is when a parent attempts to undermine the players confidence in teammates, by suggesting that "if only Debbie could pass better, my daughter could get off better sets." Any suggestions to either players or coaches that a parent lacks confidence in their daughters' teammates can give birth to destructive doubt.

Likewise, if a parent is allowed the luxury of putting down the coach in the presence of the child, the outcome can be most damaging. While this approach can do much to salve the wounds of an injured ego, often the long term effects are to sow the seeds of doubt.

Finally, there are some parents who take pride in having a child who marches to his/her own drummer and engages in conduct that violates accepted standards. One gets the impression that Jimmy Connors' and John McEnroe's parents condoned conduct that was not in the best interest of the game. Volleyball has its parents who conclude that their children are exempt from standard team rules. In a team sport like volleyball, this type of implicit or explicit endorsement of improper conduct is far more damaging than in an individual sport like tennis.

While the above is not meant as an exhaustive list of *doubt producing actions* on the part of coaches and parents, it does suggest that there are many ways in which these significant adults in the life of the players can introduce doubt. A better awareness on the part coaches and parents of the above confidence reducing actions can go a long way toward exorcising doubt from a team's support system.

Another type of awareness seems important if coaches and parents are going to work collaboratively to promote a "can-do" attitude on the volleyball court. Both coaches and parents need to come to a clearer understanding about the outlook, personal style, background and competencies of each other. More often than not the coaches and parents are coming to the situation with a significantly different frame of orientation. While it is not necessary that their frames of orientation be congruent for them to work together effectively, it is advantageous if they better understand where the other is coming from. Below some of the common differences in the frame of orientation of volleyball coaches and parents are discussed.

COACH AND PARENT PERSPECTIVES

The goals of coaches and parents are often significantly different.

For the coach, his/her primary reference group is the community of volleyball coaches. Every coach, in one degree or another, wants to be held in high esteem by fellow coaches. A winning record is the primary vehicle coaches can use to call attention to their competencies. The coaches who are ambitious to move on to more prestigious levels of coaching clearly understand that without a first rate win-loss record it is unlikely they will be tapped for professional advancement. In this sense, the players are the coach's ticket out of obscurity.

It is easy to see how under these circumstances, players get used as instruments in the achievement of a coach's goal. The level of emotional involvement that some coaches exhibit when players perform well or poorly can be understood when one acknowledges that their professional identity and progress is intimately linked to their team's performance. Professional strokes of various sorts are available only if the team is a frequent winner.

Professional recognition is not the only goal coaches hold. Some coaches, who may be less professionally ambitious, establish goals that focus primarily on player development rather than simply on winning. A frequent outcome of holding this goal is that when players respond well to the coach's emphasis upon development the team may also win and achieve recognition. When this occurs some coaches set their sights on higher levels of professional recognition and hence begin to substitute winning for player development as their highest priority.

While parents are always pleased to have their children participate on a winning team, where their sense of worth is confirmed with every win, winning does not have the same meaning for them as it has for the coach. Clearly, if their children play in a winning program, their child is more likely to achieve recognition and be provided rewarding future opportunities (i.e. college scholarships for high school and club players). But most parents are as concerned with the *process* as they are with the *outcome* of the activity. First and foremost in the minds of most

parents is their child's happiness. We are all familiar with successful teams that are brow beaten by their coaches and display little or no joy on the court, either in practice or in competition. Most parents are uneasy when their children are involved in these types of situations. Winning is not enough. For most parents, volleyball should provide opportunities for their children to feel good about themselves. Since there are limited careers in volleyball that would justify enduring the discomfort of joyless training and competition, parents have little patience with coaches who get focused completely on winning.

Parents are attracted to volleyball because it represents a wholesome, aesthetically pleasing activity that can bring a sense of accomplishment to their children. It occupies their free time with a disciplined activity that discourages involvement with drugs, alcohol and other destructive activities.

Safety is always a major pre-occupation of parents. Volleyball appeals to them because it contributes to the child's physical and psychological welfare, and discourages them from getting involved in self-destructive diversions. Self-esteem, discipline, safety, fitness and health all take precedence over winning. Almost every aggressive parental reaction to a coach can be understood as an instance where they have come to believe that the coach has his/her priorities mixed up. In short, coach-parent conflicts often occur when they do not share the same priority system.

It seems unlikely that there can ever be a perfect fit between the goals of coaches and parents, since they have different agendas. What can be aspired to is to have coaches and parents come to better understanding of their respective perspectives. They do share a mutual interest in the player's development of basic volleyball skills and attitudes. Upon this shared foundation, it should be possible to come to a clearer understanding of one another.

Coaches and parents often times do not share the same values.

For most coaches, sports are the central feature of their identity. They may occupy other roles (i.e. teacher, husband or wife) but their participation in sports has shaped their sense of who they are. Because of their involvement in sports they often embrace traditional masculine virtues, such as aggressiveness, mental toughness and fearlessness.

For most parents of young women, sports are considered only an adjunct to their central identity. Many parents would feel that if their daughters identified too closely with the sports enterprise it would compromise their chances for marriage and/or a career. It is for that reason that most parents of sportswomen insist that their daughters do not sacrifice those activities that are a traditional part of growing up as a woman in our society. It is therefore, not surprising that coaches are asked to excuse daughters from practices and competitions so that they can attend proms, go to parties, participate in family and church outings. For them, a girl who cuts herself off from these "opportunities" is limiting her options. Most parents feel it is important that their daughters continue to develop feminine virtues while engaged in sports. This can be considered "double duty" for sportswomen since men by virtue of their participation in sports are affirming their masculine identity.

Since there are virtually no career possibilities in volleyball, other considerations have to take priority even for the elite athletes. So for most young sportswomen, athletics takes its place behind career preparation, mate selection and other options. Coaches often find it difficult when they discover their cherished activity is placed far down the priority list.

The foundation upon which a working relationship between coaches and parents can be based is on the values of *discipline, loyalty and hard work*. Coaches understand that the development of these virtues is essential if their teams are to be successful. Parents understand that discipline, loyalty and hard work are required in any serious human endeavor. A mutual commitment to

these values should make it possible for coaches and parents to begin to understand one another.

The needs of coaches and parents differ.

The primary need of most coaches is recognition for their expertise. This recognition can come from peers, players, parents, the press or spectators. It is important for them to engage in activities that will allow them to be satisfied. Of course, the winning of titles provides them with opportunities to affirm their professional competency. They are also in a position to display their knowledge in their interaction with players and parents.

However, "showing off" their knowledge is often counterproductive in the satisfaction of their needs and generally is symptomatic of fragile self-esteem. But when coaches "show off" they are confirming the central importance of the need for recognition. All coaches, regardless of their ego strength, need the personal approval of both players and parents. It is generally important to the coach to be appreciated for both personal qualities and professional competencies. It is especially important for young, unattached and upwardly mobile coaches to be appreciated by their players and their families. For many of them, their team is the core of their identity around which most other activities revolve. They depend heavily upon the love and approval of their players and the player's families.

Coaches also need the financial support that is offered for their services, as modest as it may be. They, in effect, have entered into a contract with the players and their families (either directly as in club situations or indirectly as in school and college situations) to deliver educational services. In return, they receive a salary. In the college setting where players are awarded scholarships, both the coach and the players are contracted with for their services. In that case, the need for financial support exists for both coaches and players. In most cases, the need for fiscal compensation exists only for the coach.

This factor affects how he/she approaches his/her task. The consequences of the coach resigning his/her position are generally far more severe than if parents withdraw their children from the training program. In most cases, he/she needs them more than they need him/her (this is especially true in club situations where a player can leave one club and join another).

Parents seek a training program for their child with the highest payoff at the lowest cost. But parents have personal needs they are attempting to satisfy through the sports activity. They want to be recognized by their family and friends as good parents who are providing the best for their children. Also some live vicariously through their children's opportunities and achievements. They feel fulfilled when they see their children having opportunities that may never had available to them. They all share in some respects in the achievements of their children.

Both coaches and parents have the need to be good at what they do, coaching or parenting. Coaches and parents have the shared responsibility of making it possible for their charges to be and feel successful at volleyball. When a child joins a training program, the opportunity presents itself for both the coach and the parents to satisfy their generative needs and to see themselves live on in the next generations by positively impacting the lives of these aspiring volleyball players. It is this shared need that provides another cornerstone for the foundation of their relationship.

Coaches and parents are often at different points in the life cycle and face different developmental tasks.

Because of the youth of the sport of volleyball the average age of the coaches is relatively low. A large proportion of high school and club coaches in the nation are in their twenties, significantly younger than the parents of their players. Most player parents are approaching or are in midlife.

The developmental tasks that present themselves at these two points in the life cycle, early and middle adulthood, are significantly different. This age difference creates some barriers to effective collaboration in the service of the child's instructional needs.

The young coach is entering a phase in his/her life where he/she is beginning to set out on an independent course asking questions about how to put his aspirations into effect, what is the best way to start, where he/she should go and who can best help him/her. Most young adults have not yet achieved a high level of professional security. Their lack of experience affects their openness to initiatives from others. Generally, the last people from whom a young coach would ask for help would be one of his players' parents.

On the other hand, midlife parents are entering a phase in their lives when they are becoming aware that time is beginning to run out, acknowledging that if their lives are to make a difference they must give of themselves to future generations. Parents of volleyball players are sometimes inclined to nurture and support not only their own children, but also the young coach. But these parental initiatives are, more often than not, rebuffed and in many cases interpreted as unwelcome intrusions.

It is important for parents to understand the nature of these rebuffs as developmental assertions of independence on the part of the young coach. They should not allow these rejections to result in a lack of confidence in the coach's leadership. Likewise, the young coach needs to accurately interpret these "paternalistic" gestures on the part of the midlife parent. They represent genuine efforts on their part to share in shaping both their children's future and the future of the organizations with which they become identified.

The backgrounds of coaches and parents often differ.

Coaches come from the cadre of teachers who tend to be from lower middle to middle class backgrounds. They characteristically see the profession of teaching as their route to social advancement. Volleyball, on the other hand, has taken hold as a highly vital sport in upper middle class communities. The suburbs of Los Angeles and Chicago have been the centers of most rapid growth for junior volleyball. The result of this development is that we find coaches working with families who differ significantly in their background and experiences. The parents live comfortable and advantaged lives where they can afford to supply their children with the very best of everything. Many of the parents expect to be able to purchase whatever expertise is needed.

In fact, without this capability, precious few junior volleyball programs and young coaches would find few employment opportunities in junior development programs. At the same time, the differences in background and accompanying outlook allow for the development of a certain amount of resentment and mutual distrust. Sometimes, coaches resent the advantages these privileged children enjoy and are offended when parents behave in ways that make them feel like an employee obligated to respond to their every whim. By the same token, successful "can do" parents get very impatient when coaches use typical bureaucratic clichés, frequently expressed by public educators, to justify their actions. Upper middle class business and professional people have little patience with lack of flexibility. It is usually in the area of program administration where this impatience with the coaches manifests itself.

Coaches who wish to promote and develop their programs would do well to consider ways in which they can harness and direct the energy and talents of these business and professional parents. Rather than considering them as intruders, they welcome their initiatives and allow them to assume responsibility for certain non-volleyball aspects of their program. Differences in social class background need not be viewed as a barrier to eliminating doubt. Instead, this difference can be perceived as added resources that can be mobilized in the service of the programs ends.

Another background factor that affects coach-parent relationship is the role training received by the coach. The male coaches pressed into service to coach young women have been trained in the context of men's sports. They rarely apprentice as an assistant with an experienced coach of women. Therefore, their only frame of reference is their own training as an athlete. In addition, many of the male coaches have not been formally trained in volleyball. They have learned the skills on their own. The outcome of these conditions is that they import strategies of coaching that may or may not be appropriately applied to the training of female volleyball players. Sports in our society serves as a vehicle for teaching and testing masculine traits such as aggressiveness and the ability to inflict pain without being preoccupied with remorse.

These sports training traditions, which can be considered male *'rites of passage'*, are often perceived by parents of young women as totally out of phase with what they want for their daughters. It appears that those male coaches who themselves have modest records of athletic achievement, are the ones most likely to assert their masculinity by placing strenuous physical demands on their players. Their own masculine insecurity seems to drive them to greater training excesses. When parents who want their daughters to retain a clear feminine identity observe a coach with this type of background, they seize upon this masculine *'rite of passage'* as a reason to doubt the wisdom and intentions of the coach.

Generally, most volleyball coaches have not, at this point in the history of the sport, amassed much coaching experience. This is the case at all levels -- junior high school through college. It has not been uncommon to see men and women selected as head collegiate coaches in their early 20s without enjoying the benefits of an apprenticeship. Contrast the situation in collegiate volleyball with that in collegiate football. This lack of experience often gives rise to various expressions of insecurity that contribute to a lack of confidence in the coach's ability to provide the type of mature leadership parents seek.

Coaches often do not possess the full range of competencies required to carry out their actions in a manner satisfactory to parents.

To be an effective coach at any level requires a wide range of competencies:

1. Not only must the coach know the basic principles of the sport.
2. Know how to communicate them effectively.
3. Have a large storehouse of engaging and effective drills.
4. Be able to motivate a wide range of individuals.
5. Know how to orchestrate a match in a way that makes the best use of ones personnel,
6. Must be effective administrators of their programs as well.

Administrative failures often times are most annoying to parents. When a practice or competition is scheduled and parents drive their children to the designated spot only to learn that is has been cancelled, parents quickly lose confidence in the coach and the program. Unfortunately, it is in the area of administrative competencies that coaches are often deficient. Any appearance of disorder is a red flag that causes parents to carefully scrutinize a coach's program. Because many of the parents come from the business and professional ranks, they generally have high standards for administrative order. Their expectations place considerable pressure on inexperienced coaches, pressure which can cause coaches to doubt their ability to lead.

Educated parents also expect the teachers of their children to be students of the game. They expect them to take advantage of every opportunity to upgrade their professional credentials. Volleyball coaches do not always avail themselves to the vast array of opportunities for in-service training. Their failure to take advantage of these opportunities is caused by any number of factors from disinterest to lack of time and resources. Whatever the reason, if a coach fails to keep up with current volleyball knowledge, he/she can rest assured that at least one of the parents will educate him/herself enough to become aware of the coaches limitations. When parents begin to challenge a coach's knowledge, for whatever reason, the devil doubt rears his ugly head.

Many coaches have chosen a career in coaching because they are not verbally or socially facile. All parents, especially those with business and professional backgrounds, expect a clearly articulated rationale of what a coach is doing with their children. If the explanation is clear, respectful and upbeat, coaches can generally count on the parents' full support. When coaches have difficulty explaining their policies, fail to show the parents respect or deliver their news in a grim manner, coaches can be assured that the seeds of doubt will be sown.

Coaches and parents sometimes do not share the same perspective on how to motivate players.

In our society, there are many different viewpoints on how to best motivate a child to achieve. It would not be surprising to find coaches and parents with quite divergent views on how to get the best performance out of a volleyball player. Parents prefer to have their children follow the coach's instructions because they like and respect him/her as a person and as a volleyball expert. Most parents figure if a coach works to gain the affection and respect of their child and rewards him/her for his/her efforts and achievements, they will have no problem in motivating him/her to develop his/her full potential. They expect that the coach's expertise will command respect and that expression of appreciation for their child as a player and a person will keep him/her highly motivated. Some coaches, on the other hand, do not believe that these gentle techniques are sufficient to assure full effort and total concentration. They feel compelled to remind players that they are the coach and because they are the one in charge they deserve to be followed, whether or not they have earned the players respect. They further remind the players that they have the power to punish them, by keeping them on the bench or submitting them to some type of unpleasant extra training.

In some cases, they import a tradition from men's sports where the coach assumes the right to physically and psychologically abuse players who do not perform up to the coaches' standards. Coaches who embrace a coercive outlook on motivation can be assured that few parents will find their techniques compatible with their views. It is interesting to note that coaches who use coercive motivational techniques with their players are often individuals who themselves would respond poorly to coercive approaches.

While parents themselves might, use coercive techniques to motivate their child at home, they resent it when coaches either threaten or punish their children. They almost always feel that the coach has underused his/her most potent sources of influence, friendship, praise and encouragement. They see threats and punishment as prime creators of doubt in the minds of their children. Few parents develop confidence in a coach who under uses opportunities for encouragement and overuses coercive motivational techniques.

Often young coaches believe it is inappropriate for them to get "too close" to their players for fear their players will be less likely to pay close attention to their instructions. They fear losing control. Parents generally feel that the coach can achieve control by positive means. In short, when coaches and parents theories of motivation are out of phase it is difficult for confidence to grow in the team's interpersonal system.

COACHES ACTIONS FOR BUILDING THEIR CONFIDENCE AND THE PROGRAM

Coaches need to clearly communicate to parents the goals and aspirations of their programs.

At the outset, it is important for coaches to orient parents to what they are trying to achieve with their program. It is important for parents to clearly understand the terms of the contract into which they are entering. Written materials greatly decrease the prospects of misunderstanding.

Program costs and benefits need to be clearly spelled out.

Parents need to understand what benefits accrue to being a member of the training program. One needs to be careful not to oversell the benefits. If one is unable to deliver, then parents develop a lack of confidence in the coach.

At the same time, it is important to clearly specify all of the costs of the program. For example, it requires careful scheduling of family activities around team training, how parents are expected to contribute, through financial assessments and fund raisers. And the extents to which parents are expected to provide transportation and other support services. It is not enough to announce these expectations one time and expect they will be fully comprehended. Repeated reaffirmations of mutual expectations are necessary.

Parents should be regularly apprised of their children's progress.

It is extremely comforting to parents to think that the coach cares enough about their child to regularly report what goals they hold for the player and what kinds of progress she is making toward these goals. It is best if individual conferences are scheduled with each family. To wait for an informal opportunity to report progress frequently means that some families are informed, while others remain in the dark.

Coaches should orient parents to the fundamentals of volleyball so that they become more informed spectators.

So few parents have had any experience with systematic volleyball training. Both fathers and mothers can benefit from going onto the court and experiencing first hand how their children are expected to execute basic fundamentals. Some demonstrations of various strategies the coach is employs would make the parents feel much closer to the program and would reduce the prospects of their doubting the coach's abilities to lead. Keeping parents ignorant about the game is a sure way to invite uninformed criticism. It is always much easier to cope with informed, rather than uninformed criticism.

The coach should report to parents, through a newsletter or otherwise, when he/she had participated in an in-service training experience.

To assure parents that the coach is making every effort to stay abreast of the latest volleyball knowledge coaches should inform parents about how they are working to upgrade their credentials. It is comforting to parents to know that their coach is a true professional.

Assign parents booster tasks that keep them involved in the program.

Parents who become invested in the program frequently become its advocates and serve to facilitate team cohesiveness. Cohesive teams tend to produce greater confidence and less doubt. Each coach should seek out at least one parent spokesperson who can interpret team policies and plans to the other parents. It is best if all parents get involved in some way in supporting the team's efforts.

Coaches should find ways to show regular special appreciation to parents who offer their services to the team.

The coach must become the primary marketer for his program. There is no more effective marketing strategy than to recognize and praise those parents who invest in the program. It is important to involve as many parents as possible so that the special recognition can be spread among many families.

Plan events where team parents and players have informal opportunities to get better acquainted with the coach and with one another.

During the season, it is difficult to find time to organize special events. But these events are important in building team identity and spirit. As the various members of the team's expanded family come to understand their mutual concerns, a supportive learning environment has a better chance of developing. Simply a shared meal or a team outing can do much to build an environment of mutual support.

ACTIONS PARENTS CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT THE COACH AND THE TEAM

Parents should use the context of sports to teach their children basic achievement skills.

Parents must ally themselves with the coach in teaching their children how to cope with the natural frustrations of being a team member. Sports provide an excellent opportunity to teach youngsters about the realities of a highly competitive situation. They must be taught 1) how to deal with demanding superiors, 2) how to be a cooperative team member, 3) how to make use of both positive and negative feedback, 4) how to cope with adversity, 5) how to achieve "mental toughness", 6) how to be a gracious winner and 7) how to accept and live with the eccentricities of coaches, teammates and opponents.

Clearly, coaches have neither the time commitment nor the competencies to educate each and every player about these basics of "life in the fast lane." If a youngster is to become a "winner" in those activities in which he/she invests, it is essential that he/she have an effective mentor throughout the developmental sequence. The primary mentor must be his/her parents. It is only possible for a parent to assume this critical responsibility since it requires long-term continuous intimate instruction. Rather than finding it frustrating to have to help the child face these achievement related challenges, parents should welcome the opportunity to support their children, while he/she learns skills and attitudes that will open doors to a satisfying future. Unless a youngster learns to adapt to the requirements of a competitive team situation, few avenues for future achievement in competitive situations will be open.

Parents should help their children understand the unique pre-dispositions of their coaches.

It is difficult for young people to look beyond the manifest behavior of coaches to come to an understanding of their motives. When players refer to their coach as a "jerk", it provides an opportunity for a parent to encourage the player to attempt to determine what the coach was attempting to accomplish by his actions. Until players develop the capacity to get within the coaches' frame of reference, it is unlikely that they will be able to develop a close working relationship with him. Parents do not need to justify a coach's conduct, for that is not always possible. But they do need to help their child arrive at a constructive approach to dealing with the coach. Some coaches are not clear in their communications with players, so it is important for the parents to instruct their child in ways that allow them to get in clear communication. More often than not, when the meaning is understood, it is accepted by the player.

The greatest opportunity for misunderstanding between a player and a coach occurs when neither the player nor the coach are very expressive. Under those circumstances, the parents' first responsibility is to coach their child how to set up the conditions so that the coach is most likely to communicate his/her concerns freely. This parental responsibility is not unique to sports. It also applies to the full range of activities in which their child participates. Sports provide an excellent laboratory in which to learn the skills necessary for success in any organization. The emotional intensity of sports competition magnifies the issues and hence can accelerate the learning process.

Parents should instruct their children in behaviors that communicate to the coach that they have a high level of commitment to volleyball.

The most effective way to facilitate rapport with a coach is to display a high level commitment to the activity. Any astute observer of teams comes to understand that those players who display the greatest zest for the activity are the ones who receive the greatest attention from their coaches. Players need to learn to display their commitment by 1) coming early and staying late, 2) doing extra preparation, 3) being joyful and enthusiastic about the activity, 4) actively and publicly supporting their teammates and 5) displaying an interest in the coach as a person (the latter without being or appearing insecure). A parent, who is successful in teaching these skills, will never have to worry whether the coach gives his/her child a fair break.

When a player has a grievance with the coach, parents have the responsibility for teaching their child steps to remedy the situation.

A first step in achieving a remedy is to express an understanding about their children's feelings and criticism letting him/her know that they can see how he/she might have come to his/her conclusion. This can be done without putting down or criticizing the coach. If a parent allows him/herself to affirm the child's evaluation of the coach at this early stage in the crisis, it will give the child little incentive to attempt to work out the problem.

The second step is to help the youngster develop a better understanding of the circumstances that gave rise to the grievance. It is important to invite the child to try to get within the framework of the other actors in the drama.

If he/she is not satisfied with his/her own explanation of the coach's behavior, he/she should be advised to make an appointment with the coach to get further clarification. He/she should be coached as to what approach would most likely result in a resolution of the issue about which he/she is concerned. If he/she is disappointed because he/she is not getting enough playing time he/she should be coached to say in effect, "Coach, what do I need to do to break into the starting lineup?" When he/she gets an answer she then should be encouraged to embark upon the recommended path to this goal.

If the player's initiative with the coach results in an unsatisfactory answer, it could be advantageous to talk with a trusted parent leader or team administrator who has good rapport with the coach to get clarification as to the nature of the problem. This is a second line of attack after the direct approach has failed.

As a final resort, the parent should make an appointment with the coach in a setting where there are no distractions. The approach that has the best chance of succeeding is one that first of all calls for clarification of the coach's perspective on the issue. This should be done in a non-attacking manner, as two mentors attempting to arrive at a strategy for working with the child that will be most productive. Any challenge to the wisdom of the coach's approach will likely be counterproductive and could result in punitive actions being taken against the child. Therefore, parents need to use an approach that seeks the coach's advice as to how the parent can support him/her in his/her efforts to train his/her children. If at all possible, the parent should leave the conference agreeing to take whatever steps necessary to help his/her children be a more effective contributor to the team.

Of course, if the parent learns things in the conference that would suggest that the child should be removed from the training program, this should only be done in collaboration with the child.

Parents should conduct themselves at competitions and practices in ways that earn the respect of the coach.

It is important that parents demonstrate their commitment to the program by making their presence felt at as many events as their schedules permit. At competitions, it is most appropriate for parents to demonstrate enthusiasm for the activity by cheering on the team. However, it is essential that the cheering be of a positive nature. In NO case should technical instructions be shouted to players. In addition, any negative comments made to either players or other parents can inject doubt into the interpersonal system.

Furthermore, practices or competitions are inappropriate times for parents to engage coaches in discussions about the team or their child. Coaches are typically preoccupied with other matters and unprepared for a serious discussion about the issues on the parent's mind. A rule of thumb is that parents should *never confer with a coach in a gym*. Over coffee or at home make the best settings for a serious discussion about a child's progress. Of course, it is most appropriate to give the coach and his team words of encouragement, either before or after a game. But, it's inadvisable to intrude into the pre-or post-game atmosphere the coach has orchestrated to accomplish the team's mission.

Conclusion

In spite of the different perspectives that coaches and parents bring into relationships with players, they share a common commitment to help their young charges develop their skills and attitudes to the highest possible levels. In this publication, it has been asserted that skill development and performance are profoundly influenced by a player's level of self-confidence. When he/she begins to doubt him/herself, he/she often falls into a downward spiral of failure. When this sequence occurs for even one player, team performance can be severely affected.

It has been concluded that all actors in the instructional triad (coaches, players and parents) can take actions to guard against an invasion of doubt by mutually supporting one another. It is important that each actor have confidence in the other's capacity to contribute to the success of the volleyball enterprise. While there appear to be natural barriers to building a system of mutual trust and support, it is possible to work together to build an effective environment for learning and performance.

The most promising antidotes to infestations of doubt are communication, understanding and mutual encouragement. Threats and discounts serve only to nurture the growth of doubt. Coaches, players and parents all need to be reminded frequently that they do indeed have the capacity to effectively perform their respective tasks. Each task (coaching, playing and parenting) is essential to producing a joyful, growth-producing volleyball program.

Parents and coaches can join together to promote the types of learning that will allow their teams to achieve.

NOTES: