



## **2024-2025 Season Handbook**

Revised September 2024

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
MVP History.....	3
Coaching Philosophy / Team Goals.....	3
General Philosophies.....	3
Team Levels.....	3
Playing Time.....	4
Teams Supported.....	4
Practice Players.....	4
Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
MVP Board of Directors.....	5
Program Director.....	5
Coaches.....	6
Players.....	6
Parents/Guardians.....	7
Consequences.....	7
Program Policies.....	8
Team Travel Policies.....	9
Transportation.....	9
Lodging.....	9
Communication.....	10
Financial Commitment.....	10
Dues.....	11
<b>Refunds.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to familiarize parents, players, and sponsors with MVP and identify the policies and procedures that govern how MVP is run.

### ***MVP History***

This is our **39th** season where we plan to take multiple teams to the USA Volleyball's Junior National Championships or to the AAU National Championships. Since our first USAV Junior National Championships in 1987 in Albuquerque, we have seen both events grow in the number of teams participating and in the level of play. The challenge for us has always been to develop teams that can compete at the local, regional, and Junior National level. It has also always been our goal to instill within the participants an appreciation and love for the sport. We firmly subscribe to the belief that volleyball is truly a lifetime sport that can be enjoyed well after the junior level.

We will do our best to prepare our players and put them in the best environment to showcase their abilities to college recruiters who will be present at various tournaments. The MVP [website](#) provides a complete list of past players who went on to play collegiate ball. MVP takes great pride in seeing so many of our alumni continuing to play at high levels.

We will provide assistance to program participants in continuing to play volleyball beyond their junior volleyball years. Many opportunities exist to participate whether it's through outdoor events (grass or beach), collegiate club, Chinese 9-man, and adult USA Volleyball competition.

## **Coaching Philosophy / Team Goals**

This section aims to cover the MVP coaching philosophy and how each team will be run. The MVP coaching philosophy is established by the MVP Board of Directors. For any questions or concerns, please contact the MVP Director.

### ***General Philosophies***

We provide quality training above and beyond what is available through the school systems and the opportunity to compete at the local, regional, and national levels. This competitive athletic experience enhances social development, contributes to mental and physical health, and teaches the values of teamwork, responsibility, self-discipline, and self-motivation.

We provide a solid foundation of fundamentals to enable participants to develop not only as players, but also as persons. Given this base, we hope that these youths will continue playing well beyond their junior club years. Volleyball is truly a lifetime sport.

### ***Team Supported***

MVP will support the following teams:

- MVP 18 Black
- MVP 18 Red

- MVP 17 Black
- MVP 17 Red
- MVP 16 Black
- MVP 16 Red
- MVP 15 Black
- MVP 14 Black
- MVP 13-14 Red
- MVP 13 Black
- MVP 12 Black

There are 2 levels of teams within MVP: Black and Red.

**Red team** coaches take a more “developmental” approach to coaching. Player roles and positions are more loosely defined, especially on the 12, 13, and 14 Red teams. Coaches will afford players opportunities to play various positions.

Red teams are targeting Premier (AAU) or USA (USAV) division competition at their final tournament of the season. The 13/14 and 16 Red teams will end their season at Boys East Coast Championship (USAV) or an AAU equivalent (in terms of timing and size of tournament), while the older teams will end their season at AAU Nationals or USAV Nationals. All players will be given more opportunities to contribute to and experience tournament play

**Black teams** are the most competitive level; these teams are projected to and train with the goal of competing at the Open level of National Championship competition. Open is the highest level for AAU and USAV Boys.

### ***Playing Time***

All players will be afforded equal practice time, this does not guarantee equal playing time at games, tournaments or other competitive events. Playing time is at the discretion of the Head Coach. There are many factors a coach may use to determine playing time and line up combinations. These factors include: players ability, position, attitude, performance, and practice attendance. In general, players must have a conversation with the coach about increasing playing time prior to the player’s parent/guardian engaging with the coach.

### ***Practice Players***

Coaches may select practice players to support their team(s). Please remember that during practices, the coaches will be giving priority to rostered players over practice players and will continue to work with practice players to improve their volleyball skills and prepare them for promotion to full team member. The promotion may be within the same season or may be a following season and is at the sole discretion of the Head Coach. Practice players on age eligible teams may be asked for availability for tournaments on an as-needed basis.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The following sections identify the roles and responsibilities for all MVP members/participants.

### ***MVP Board of Directors***

There are a total of five members that comprise the Board of Directors. These members are entrusted with providing the vision and ability to grow/improve MVP. The Board will also help maintain the goals and philosophy of the Program.

The primary responsibilities of the Board are, but not limited to:

- Select Program Director.
- Maintain/ensure program philosophy is maintained.
- Provide insight to grow and improve the program.

The Board of Directors for 2024-2025:

- President: Rajesh Rathnam – Program Director and Coach (2008-present); Winston Churchill High School Coach (2001-Present)
- Vice President: Aldis Berzins – Stevenson University Men’s Volleyball Coach (2016-2024); MVP Coach (2000-2011); USA National Team (1979-1985; 1983 MVP; 1984 Gold Medal)
- Paul Chin - MVP Coach (2008-present), Chinese Youth Club 9-man Coach (2000-present)
- Treasurer: Grace Lau – MVP Coach (2022-present)
- Secretary: Sara Williams – MVP Coach (2021 - present), Chinese Youth Club 9-man Coach (2023-present)

### ***Program Director***

The Program Director provides the overall management of Program activities. The primary responsibilities of the program director are:

- Coordinate and manage all program members including resolve or assist in resolving any issues, in performing coaching tasks (e.g., coaching, recruiting players, player selection, team formation)
- Work with Treasurer and Board to develop and administer the program budget (e.g., paying bills, invoicing players, reimbursing coaches, purchasing equipment and uniforms, publishing financial records).
- Control inventory of equipment between practices, tournaments, and MVP teams Registering program and coaches, players, and chaperones with USAV and AAU and ensuring all requirements are met (e.g., background check information for coaches/chaperones, Safe Sport certification).
- Register MVP team for tournaments via the various online registration systems (e.g., Advanced Event Systems, SportWrench, SignUptoPlay.com) including submitting rosters, coordinating with coaches to determine player availability.

The time commitment of the Program Director is significant. A Program Director will likely spend over 20+ hours per week managing the Program.

MVP Director: Rajesh (JJ) Rathnam  
JJ.Rathnam@MVPVolleyball.net  
202.352.8754

## ***Coaches***

The Coaches are responsible for coaching! The MVP coaches are the heart and soul of our program. Coaches must review and abide by The USA Volleyball [Coaches Code of Ethics and Conduct](#).

The primary responsibilities of coaches include:

- Provide high quality technical instruction in a fun and supportive environment. Learning is more easily achieved when players (and coaches) look forward to working together.
- Set high expectations, continuously evaluating performance.
- Give constructive feedback while challenging the team and individuals to exceed their own expectations.
- Recognize that each player is unique and has unique motivations.
- Value the entire individual – not just the player.
- Treat players with respect.
- Help the players to develop confidence in themselves.
- Provide tournament results to the Website Coordinator.
- Assist other coordinators on tournament registration, travel arrangements, uniforms, etc.
- Maintaining team paperwork (Medical waivers, team rosters, etc.) as required by USAV.

## ***Players***

Players are responsible for positively representing MVP. The primary responsibilities of players include:

- Show respect: Demonstrate respect for yourself and others at all times in your words, actions, and attitude. This includes communications in-person and online. You must be respectful of other players, coaches, and officials. In addition, you must seek to correct any harm that you cause your teammates and coaches, whether it be accidental or intentional.
- Attendance: Arrive on time for all practices. Practices are mandatory, unless specified by the coaches. Inform the coach at least 24 hours advance if you are going to be late or miss practice (barring unforeseen circumstances). If you have a tournament conflict, inform the coach when Wilson Lin posts the hotel reservations in Band, if not before.
- Have a growth mindset: Participate with an open and growth mindset, a positive attitude, and a focused determination to improve. Support your teammates on and off

the court and do not criticize my teammates when they make mistakes. Players and coaches are learning together, no one is perfect, and we all make mistakes.

- Be kind: Do not engage in bullying, harassing, or harmful interactions with your teammates including outside of the gym and online. Whenever possible, you must commit to intervening if you see a teammate engaging in these behaviors.
- Seek to resolve conflicts: Commit to resolving conflicts with other team members and coaches respectfully, which includes getting the assistance of the coach when you are unable to resolve conflicts on your own.
- Playing time: If you have questions about your playing time, you agree to speak to your coach to understand what you need to improve to increase your playing time. Questions should be asked after observing a 24 hour waiting period.
- Remain in good academic standing: You must maintain a passing grade point average and avoid disciplinary infractions at school.

### ***Parents/Guardians***

Parents/guardians must review and abide by CHRVA's [Spectator/Parent Code of Conduct](#). In addition, parents/guardians are expected to follow this code of conduct at practice, MVP activities, and tournaments.

- Cheer, clap and support the players using encouraging, positive comments.
- Parents remain on the sidelines during practice and matches unless specifically invited onto the court by the coach.
- Do not engage in sideline coaching. Players have to focus on their team and coach; offering hints and advice during practices or matches is distracting for players.
- Know that mistakes are part of the process and they will happen. Help your player develop an open and growth mindset, a positive attitude, and a focused determination to improve. Don't criticize your player if they make a mistake, repeat #1.
- Get your child to practice, games, and tournaments on time.
- Pay all dues and club costs on-time. If you are experiencing financial hardship, email the Club Director.
- Ensure your child understands and knows how they can escalate any of their concerns to the coaches.
- Communicate respectfully orally and in writing to teammates, coaches, and other parents/guardians.
- Observe a 24-hour waiting period after tournaments before communicating concerns to the coaching staff. The time starts from the end of the last game of the tournament. In a multi-day event that would be the end of the final game played on the last day of the event.
- Encourage your son to follow the Player Code of Conduct. In particular, coaches need parents' support ensuring that players' interactions outside the court and online meet the expectations established above.

## **Consequences**

In determining consequences, the coach, and Program Director, as applicable, will consider the player's age; previous behavior; and seriousness of the infraction. Players that violate the Code of Conduct may be subject to one or more of the following consequences:

- Bringing together the team and coaches involved in a conflict to discuss the topic, resolve issues, and propose solutions.
- Informing parents/guardians of their children's behavior and, in the context of discipline, seeking their assistance in correcting inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
- Apologizing in writing or orally to the impacted teammate or coach.
- Attending and sitting out during practice or tournament play.
- Requiring a player to compensate for any loss or damage that has resulted because of a behavior.
- Suspension or removal of player from team. MVP will not issue refunds to players that are removed from the club.

Similarly, in determining consequences for a parent or guardian, the coach and Club Director will consider the previous behaviors and seriousness of the infraction. Parents that violate the Code of Conduct may be subject to one or more of the following consequences:

- A warning from coach and/or Club Director
- Apologizing in writing or orally to the impacted teammate or coach.
- Being removed from practice or a match sidelines.
- Permanent prohibition from attending MVP practices or matches.
- Removal of the player from team. Athletes that have played in an officially sanctioned USAV and/or AAU tournament will not be released from USAV and/or AAU membership linkage to MVP.

**Team dissolution:** MVP Board of Directors, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to terminate a team's season in instances where the code of conduct infractions are pervasive or ongoing. In these instances, MVP will not:

- Release athletes from USAV and/or AAU membership linkage to MVP if the athlete was rostered for USAV and/or AAU sanctioned tournament(s).
- Issue any reimbursements.

## **Program Policies**

**What rules we have are strictly enforced.** Otherwise, the volunteers that we have would be inundated by exceptions. The following rules will be strictly enforced:

- Coaches, players, and parents may not engage in discriminatory actions of any kind against a person or group of people on account of race, ethnic, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Players are required to eliminate any inter-school rivalries and personality conflicts. Players in the program come from many different backgrounds and schools and are expected to prioritize the MVP family.



- Players are required to abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Participants in violation of this policy are subject to immediate disciplinary actions that may include being sent home immediately at their expense and/or immediate expulsion from the program.
- Dues must be paid promptly. If financial commitments are too burdensome, please contact the program Director to discuss options.
- Coaches, chaperones, players, and parents/guardians must adhere to the USA Volleyball [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#), [2023 SafeSport Code](#), [2023-24 USAV Code of Conduct](#); and [2023 AAU Code Book](#).

MVP will abide by any punishments imposed by USAV and/or AAU.

## **Team Travel Policies**

The Maryland Volleyball Program prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing, all as described in the USA Volleyball SafeSport Handbook. All coaches for the Maryland Volleyball Program participate in the SafeSport Training and must pass the SafeSport Certification before they are allowed to coach for the Maryland Volleyball Program.

The Maryland Volleyball Program 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.

## ***Transportation***

- Parents/guardians must pick up their player first and drop off their player last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
- Coaches must have the player's parent/guardian's written consent prior to transporting a player one-on-one. The player or their parent/guardian can withdraw consent at any time. A Coach may transport a player if they are accompanied by another Coach or at least two minors.

## ***Lodging***

- All contact at a hotel or lodging site between a Coach and athlete must be observable and interruptible.
- One-on-one meetings between a coach and a player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms.
- A coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).
- The coach or his/her designee will establish a curfew by when all players must be in their hotel rooms or in a supervised location. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be made of each room by at least two properly background screened adults. At no time should only one adult be present in a room with minor non-related players.

- No coach or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while performing their coaching and/or chaperoning duties.
- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents, parents will be notified before any action is taken. If immediate action is necessary, parents will be notified immediately after.

## Communication

The Maryland Volleyball Program website ([www.mvpvolleyball.net](http://www.mvpvolleyball.net)) and Instagram (@mvpvolleyball) will be used as the primary method for disseminating information to the general public. Such information may include clinics, open gyms, tournament results, notable player achievements, etc.

Teams will use the BAND team application to plan, chat, poll and communicate within the team. Please check the BAND app for your team **AT LEAST** twice per week (Monday and Thursday). Please turn on notifications for the BAND team application to keep up to date on all team related information.

If the website or BAND team does not answer your question, please do not hesitate to contact your team's coach.

## Financial Commitment

The financial commitment to participate with the MVP can be fairly significant. This section provides participants and parents with an idea of the costs associated with the MVP. It also provides some guidelines as to the minimum costs as well as potential additional costs if a particular team goes to Boys Junior National Championships/AAU National Championships or wishes to travel for out of region tournaments.

The following is a list of fixed costs during the season that are distributed evenly to all MVP participants:

- Gym fees for practice (based on individual team usage)
- USAV/AAU registration for coaches
- Coach stipends and certification fees (e.g. - IMPACT, SafeSport, CAP, background checks, etc.)
- MVP accounting fees
- Volleyball equipment (e.g. - balls, ball carts, ball bags, antennae, etc.)
- Uniforms
- Special Events (e.g. – College Signing Day, Open Gyms, etc)

The following is a list of costs that are charged to specific teams/individual based on participation (e.g., for East Coast Championships, USA Volleyball Boys Junior National Championship, multi-day tournaments, etc.):

- Hotel fees coaches and chaperones

- Travel Costs for coaches and chaperones: Airfare, Car/van rental, parking fees, gas, and tolls
- Gym rental fees for extra practices
- Hudl and other, team-specific equipment and uniforms costs
- Tournament entry fees

Dues will be collected on fixed dates as identified in the following sections. Dues are collected based on the estimated costs for the current season. The estimated costs cover all the items identified above. MVP will not issue refunds if a team is not accepted or otherwise does not attend all the tentatively scheduled tournaments.

## **Dues**

All checks must be made payable to **Maryland Volleyball Program**. Families choosing to pay via PayPal or credit card will be charged a 3% convenience fee.

For all our teams, participation in any additional tournaments will be decided based on player and coaching availability. MVP will not issue refunds in the event that a team is not accepted or otherwise does not attend all the tentatively scheduled tournaments.

We run the Maryland Volleyball Program with very little overhead costs and no external financial support. As such, paying player dues **on time** is extremely important. These funds are needed to cover the expenses of the program from month-to-month. Late payment will result in player removal from the team roster.

## **Refunds**

Under no circumstances will MVP issue full or partial reimbursements in the event that a player is unable to participate for any reason (e.g., injury, removal from the team.)