

As a parent of a club volleyball player, I can tell you firsthand that the annual event called Tryouts is one of the most emotionally-taxing, logistically challenging and often complicated processes that my family has faced. I think many of you might agree, so I thought I'd write a series of posts to help out new and seasoned volleyball parents alike. By the way, as a new club director in the highly-competitive Northern California region, I can also say that all or most clubs have the best intentions. We are all trying to attract strong athletes and put together the best possible teams. We don't put together clubs to create heartache or become millionaires.

Here are 7 tips to think about as you are planning-

- **Make sure you register with the NCVA first.** In the United States, there are 2 major governing bodies for youth volleyball: USA Volleyball (USAV) and the Junior Volleyball Association (JVA). With few exceptions, most Northern California clubs are a part of the USAV which has a regional body called the NCVA. Before you even register to tryout for a club team in NorCal, you must register your daughter with the NCVA. It's not that expensive, and you can do it [here](#).
- **Do your homework on the clubs.** There are many clubs in the NCVA, and there are probably more than a couple clubs in your area. Do your research because they are all not alike. Some have long histories. Others are up and coming. Some have their own facilities; others rent gyms. Each one has a different personality and culture, much like a school you go to. And services and club dues vary widely. Ask them- any good organization will be upfront and honest about how they operate; you have a right to know.
- **Avoid registering to tryout with every team.** It can be time-consuming, harrowing and sometimes costly. Almost all tryouts take place on November 1-9, 2019. Most tryouts are about 1.5 - 2 hours, and you need to plan to arrive 30-45 minutes early. As such, if you register for many clubs, it's often logistically tough, not to mention stressful on your athlete. And many coaches do take notice if athletes show up late or leave early; impressions are important. My daughter's first year, she tried out for two clubs; that worked pretty well.
- **Know your rights.** The NCVA has very clear rules in their [handbook](#) that no club can accept commitment paperwork or collect deposits or club fees for tryouts prior to 6:00 pm on November 10. With pressure to fill rosters, some clubs may try to circumvent the process. Beware of those clubs because your player may risk suspension for the season
- **When your player was born matters.** Even though your daughter is currently 12, she may not be eligible to tryout for a 12's team. It all depends on her birthdate, and those [cutoff dates](#) are posted on the NCVA site. She can tryout to "playup" meaning play for an older team. This sometimes happens during the transition from Middle to High School or if your athlete is exceptional and a team needs a specific type of player for a position. So check the dates because you don't want to make a mistake and tryout for a team you're not eligible for.
- **Get to know the coaches.** Coaches are really crucial; like teachers for a class. Your player will spend 5-6 months with the coach(es). Their prior experience is important, but

not everything. You want to look at their philosophy, teaching style and energy and how your athlete would react to them.

- **Waiting for tryouts to get noticed is usually too late.** The weeks leading up to tryouts is a critical time. To be fair to most coaches, it can be very difficult to evaluate dozens of players trying out during a frenetic 2-hour period. For that reason, most clubs offer camps, clinics and open gyms prior to tryouts. This gives coaches an opportunity to see players and see who's really interested. It also gives you and your daughter the chance to meet coaches and see other potential teammates. These pre-tryout programs also give you a glimpse into what to expect during the tryout, like an SAT prep course. This can take some of the anxiety out when November 1-9, 2019 rolls around.

Remember, at the end of the day, it is about your athlete and ensuring that she has the best experience possible. The more relaxed and informed you are about the process, the more relaxed your athlete will be.

Hope this helps.