

Spokane Sky Volleyball Club

Parent/Player Handbook



Approved for 2012-13 Season

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Introduction

Spokane Sky Volleyball Club was established in 1999 by Steve Hertz, Vicki Hertz and Penny Wohrle as a club for Shadle Park High School players. From 2001 to 2005, Club Director Joanne White continued that mission while broadening the scope to include players from other Spokane schools. In 2005 Spokane Sky transitioned to a formal board structure and became established as a non-profit organization with the state of Washington and the IRS. Currently Spokane Sky has no school affiliation and serves players from Eastern Washington and North Idaho. We offer teams in all age groups with varied options for season length, practice options, cost and travel.

Our player/parent handbook is designed to educate you about our club, our coaching philosophy and how to be successful within Spokane Sky. We hope this handbook will provide you information that will be useful to your decision on whether to play for Spokane Sky during the upcoming season.

Mission Statement

Spokane Sky Volleyball Club is committed to:

- Teaching the fundamentals, advanced skills, strategies and tactics of volleyball in an fun and competitive environment; and
- Teaching the values of good sportsmanship, a strong work ethic, and the concept of teamwork; and
- Fostering clear communication between players, coaches and parents.

Executive Board

The Executive Board directs and oversees all activities within Spokane Sky VBC. Board members are all volunteers and new board members are nominated by a current board member or parent within the organization and voted in by the Executive Board.

Club Director

Mark Springer

509-879-0919

spokaneskyvbc@gmail.com

Spokane Sky Executive Board

David Zabinski – Treasurer

Larissa Welch – Apparel

Chris Broom – Tournament Director

Kerry Grimes – Parent Advisor

Jannah Simpson – Travel Coordinator

Elizabeth Steinmark – Member at Large

Kelly Potter – Social Media

Mark Springer, Club Director

Mark is entering his 15th year coaching volleyball and his 8th year as the club director at Spokane Sky. He has been involved in most facets of the game over the years. Mark has been an official intermittently the past 14 years, officiating at different times with high school, USAV and with local universities as a linesman. He coached for 4 seasons with local high schools and has coached players from 5th grade through high school varsity. Mark is also involved with the advisory board for the Evergreen Region and is the tournament director for the Inland Northwest Klassic. During the summer Mark also runs a juniors grass doubles program.



Open House

The Evergreen Region hosts an open house in the fall prior to club tryouts where parents can come to one location and talk to representatives from most of the Spokane area clubs. This is a great opportunity to talk to coaches about their coaching philosophy as well as get information about practice schedules and costs for the different teams that your daughter may be interested in. Spokane Sky will be there with most of our coaching staff. Details for the Evergreen Region Open House will be posted on the club website and emailed out to our Sky families from the previous season.

Tryouts

Spokane Sky will hold open tryouts each year to select players for our teams. Our tryouts will comply with Evergreen Region policies that include player pre-registration, tryout date guidelines and tryout fees.

Tryout Preparation:

- Download and review the tryout plan from our website for your age group prior to going to tryouts. That way there will be no surprises and you will be better prepared to do your best.
- Download and fill out all the needed paperwork before you come to the tryout.
- Be sure to get there early because we do physical measurements and take pictures of all players prior to the listed tryout start time. Forty-five minutes before the scheduled start time is best.
- Email us to let us know if you will be arriving late because you are coming from another tryout.
- Wear something colorful or bright so that coaches can identify you even if they can't see your number.
- Great effort turns heads and is remembered. Avoid being tentative in your play but know the difference between being aggressive and playing recklessly.
- Let the lead tryout coach know if you are trying out while injured or have to leave early for whatever reason.
- Talk to us before or after tryouts as much as you want! We value the opportunity to answer any of your questions.



Playing Up:

Our even age groups (14s and 16s) have between 40-60 players trying out for 10 spots. Realistically we have 1-2 U13 players who can compete for a U14 spot and 3-6 U15 players who can compete for a U16 spot. If you are interested in playing up then:

- Indicate your team preference on your Spokane Sky Tryout Form.
- Email the club director prior to tryouts of your desire to play up.
- Attend your age appropriate tryout.
- An evaluator from the 14s/16s team will observe you in your age appropriate tryout and may choose to switch you to the older team tryout at that time.

The Make-Up Tryout:

Spokane Sky schedules a make-up tryout on the Friday of the tryout week. Our make-up tryout is not a regular tryout and shouldn't be used as a way to attend another club's tryout earlier in the week while reserving an option with Spokane Sky. This tryout does not give us the same time as a regular tryout and we don't have the option for game drills. The tryout may only last between 15-60 minutes. We will be offering spots after our regular tryout so the make-up is really only a good option for a player who was

sick, injured or out of town on the day of our regular tryouts. If Spokane Sky is one of your top choices then you need to make every effort to attend the regular tryout for your age group.

The Selection Process:

Teams will consist of a minimum of 9 and no more than 12 athletes. We will have multiple coaches evaluating players during our tryouts. Each year during tryouts we consider every athlete as a prospective player of Spokane Sky VBC. We will reassess each athlete in the club every year. Each athlete must come to tryouts ready to compete for a place on a team, sometimes against other Sky players and sometimes against athletes new to the club. We will evaluate as best as we can during the duration of the tryout. Selection will be based upon the following criteria:

- A player's performance during the tryout - skill level, effort, competitiveness and interaction with other athletes.
- Our perception of that player's athletic potential – what she may be able to do over the course of the season.
- Our perception how coachable the player is.
- Evaluations of players during the past club season, camps or the current high school season.
- Being in good standing with the Spokane Sky and USA Volleyball.
- Past history of parental involvement or behavior, whether positive or negative.

Notification:

Coaches will begin notifying players on the day of the tryout but will not get to everyone that night. When we call you we ask that you let us know if we are your first choice, one of several choices you are actively considering, or if you have decided to play for another team. Please be honest with us as it does not affect our desire to have you play for Sky but does help us communicate accurate information to our alternates. With this first call the player and her parents will be asked to verbally commit to the team. The verbal commitment is not binding but will be formalized on the commitment day and then with the signature of the letter of intent and the team fee deposit. If the offer is denied, Spokane Sky reserves the right offer the spot to another player.

Movement between Rosters:

Occasionally we will move an athlete from one team to another as needed to complete a roster. This may happen during tryouts or during the regular season. We will not move an athlete from or to another team until we have discussed the move with the athlete and the parents. It is usually to simply fill a temporary need due to injury, illness, or scheduling conflicts. Athletes moving to another team for more than two single day tournaments will have their team fee pro-rated, subtracting or adding, as needed.

Multi-Sport Athletes

Spokane Sky values the participation of multi-sport athletes within our program. We understand that many athletes may participate in other school sports or activities such as music or drama and that it can be a challenge to balance the commitment that is required with multiple activities. It will be at the coach's discretion, however, to consider such conflicts and the potential effect on the team during tryouts. Players are requested to communicate with coaches prior to tryouts regarding other sports and other activities that may cause potential conflicts.

If athletes participate in more than one sport or activity during the club season we request they provide their coach with a schedule of their other sports games and practices. If a game for another sport conflicts with a Spokane Sky practice the athlete will be excused from the practice. Conflicts between a school sport's scheduled event and a USAV tournament will be handled on a case-by-case situation between the athlete and the head coach. If there is an overlap between a high school practice or game and a Spokane Sky practice it is our expectation that the athlete will come to the Spokane Sky practice afterwards even if that is only for 30-45 minutes.

We strongly encourage that if you play a high school sport during your club season that you talk with your high school coach so that you understand if you have any leeway in terms of missing a high school practice

to attend a USAV tournament. If you are prioritizing volleyball over the high school sport it is helpful if your high school coach knows that at the beginning of the high school season.

While there is not a penalty for participation in high school sports there is a cost to participating in two or more time intensive sports/activities at one time. An athlete's skill acquisition and understanding of team offensive and defensive systems may suffer with missed practices. This can have an adverse affect on play-time as a critical component to an athletes playing time is her performance relative to her peers on the team.

Parent Meeting

Spokane Sky has a mandatory parent meeting on the Tuesday following commitment day for the U15 and older teams. Location and times will be posted for each team on the club website. We have several tasks that need to be completed during this meeting:

- Complete and turn in paperwork which includes the:
 - USAV Medical History and Release Form
 - USAV Letter of Intent
 - USAV Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct Form
 - Spokane Sky VBC Parent Code of Conduct Form (see end of handbook)
 - Spokane Sky VBC Athlete Code of Conduct Form (see end of handbook)
- Payment of full team fee (Youth and U12 teams) or \$500 deposit for U13 or older teams
- Sizing of player jerseys and/or warm-ups
- Parent meeting with your team's head coach

Scorekeeper Clinic

Every player is required to attend a scorekeepers clinic. Spokane Sky will schedule their club clinic in early December. The clinic is free for players or adult chaperones that wish to attend. If players are not able to attend the scheduled club clinic then they need to contact the club director to find out information on make-up clinic options. Players will not be put on a roster until they have attended a scorekeeper clinic.



SET 1
LINE-UP SHEET

TEAM		
IV	III	II
V	VI	I
SERVICE		COACH SIGNATURE

Practice

Spokane Sky teams practice twice per week. Team practices are usually 1.5-2 hours in length. Some teams may have additional specialty practices based upon coach preferences for their teams. Coaches will sometimes schedule additional practices in preparation for major tournaments. There are times when our practice schedule will change based on weather conditions or school events. The club will make every attempt to reschedule gym time during that week rather than losing a practice.

Practice Rules:

Our focus with practice is to create an environment that fosters individual skill acquisition, development of team systems, and the learning of volleyball "IQ" or situational awareness. To achieve that, certain rules are required by all teams as detailed below:

- Every practice is important. It is expected that each player will exercise good time management skills so that scheduling conflicts are kept to a minimum.
- All athletes are expected to make every effort to attend practice. If a player must miss a practice, a telephone call or text (not email) to their head coach is expected at least 4 hours before practice. Only after attempting and failing to reach your head coach, can a player contact a teammate to relay the message to the head coach. Advanced notice is expected if the missed practice is due to vacation, school function or another event scheduled in advance.
- Missing practice may result in loss of playtime based upon whether the absence was excused and the expectations set up by the coach at the parent meeting.
 - Excused absences are for family or school events in which the player cannot control the scheduling of that event (concerts, plays or games).

- Unexcused absences are or situations where better time management and scheduling would result in the player not missing practice.
- Players who can only attend a half hour or 45 minutes of a practice because of another event should still come to practice. It is much better to get some practice time rather than miss the whole practice.
- Injured athletes who can attend school are expected to attend practice to support their team and be available to help where they can, even if they cannot physically participate in practice. Players with fever or stomach flu (diarrhea and/or vomiting) should not come to practice.
- Scheduled practice time is start time. Please arrive early enough to be dressed and completely ready for practice by start time. This usually requires arriving not less than 15 minutes before start time.
- All practices are open and parents are welcome to observe practices at any time. Parents may not coach or offer instruction to their daughter or another team member at any time during practice. Parents are not permitted on the court, unless requested by the coaching staff.
- There will be no jewelry allowed at practice. Please leave your jewelry at home.
- Cell phones are not to be checked during practice or during water breaks. If a parent needs to contact a player for an emergency then they should text the head or assistant coach during practice.

Playing Time

Playing time, for many players and parents, is a central concern that can distract from our focus on the team's success and can often create divisions within the team. At Spokane Sky we do not guarantee equal playing time at any age level but seek to be fair in the amount of court time that each athlete has. We also recognize that participation in competition is a critical part of each player's development.

In any case, every player will have an equal opportunity to compete for playtime within their position during practice and at tournaments. A player's time will be affected by any of the following:

- A player's practice attendance
- A player's ability to perform at the necessary level for a skill or position
- How a player's attitude adds to or detracts from the chemistry or performance of the team
- A player's past performance during the tournament or the last week of practice
- A player's effort and work ethic
- The importance of the match
- The needs of the team in the present as well as later in the season
- Not being in good standing with respect to team fees

Some generalizations can be made with regards to playtime issues.

- It is our goal that all players have some on-court role every match. There may be exceptions with players recovering from injuries, problems with adherence to team rules/policies or when teams are trying to win a bid/move to the gold bracket of tournament play in a multi-day tournament.
- Playtime is generally more equal at the younger age groups (Youth, 12s and 13s).
- Playtime will vary by position with some positions playing all the way around the court and some playing only front or back row.
- Playtime is more equal during pool play than in tournament play.
- Playtime may be more equal earlier in the season as coaches are exploring different lineups and identifying starters.
- Playtime may be more equal in one-day regional tournaments compared to multi-day tournaments, qualifiers or Regional tournaments.
- Position and time on court are determined by the needs of her Sky team, not her history from past club seasons or the current needs of her school team.
- Often times, players are unclear on what they need to change or how playing time is determined and an early conversation can address these questions.

All playing time is decided by the coaches and is not negotiable. Coaches have the right to play whomever

they think is best suited for a position and who helps contribute to the team's development and success. Here are some suggestions on how to talk with your coaches about playing time.

- Avoid language that is demanding or accusatory. Instead ask, "What can I do to play more..."
- Avoid seeking to talk to your coach when you are emotional. We seek to utilize the 24-hour rule if at all possible.
- Parents may participate in the conversation with the coach but the player should always be present when discussing playtime issues.
- We will not discuss other players on the team but will focus on what you, the player, need to do to have opportunities to play more.
- While email or a phone call can start a discussion we prefer that all playtime discussion to be in-person with the coach and the player and scheduled before or after practice.

College Recruiting

Spokane Sky posts information about the recruiting process on our website. The club can provide assistance with certain parts of the recruiting process but the athlete and her family need to be active in the process. The role of your coach and Spokane Sky is to:

- Develop your technical skills.
- Provide opportunities to get vertical jump measurements during the season.
- Provide options for filming practice to obtain practice video clips for recruiting tape.
- Provide opportunities to be seen with participation in large multi-day or regional tournaments.
- Provide advice to players and families on the recruiting process.
- Provide a point of contact for college coaches who may not be able to legally contact your daughter directly.

As an athlete or parent of a prospective college athlete you are responsible to:

- Gather and edit any game video of your daughter.
- Be active in contacting schools and coaches. Unless you are incredibly gifted athletically you will need to initiate most conversations.
- Educate yourself. We will provide you with a lot of good resources but you will have to read them.

Tournaments

Most tournaments that Spokane Sky teams enter take one day, either a Saturday or a Sunday. The typical one-day tournament schedule starts at 8:00 AM with pool play consisting of three or four matches followed by bracket play in the afternoon. A few tournaments (Pacific Northwest Qualifier, President's Day Tournament and Emerald City Classic) involve two days of pool play, followed by single elimination bracket play.

Parent Guidelines:

- We strongly recommend that players have a nutritious dinner and have a 10:00PM curfew the night before a tournament.
- Parents are responsible for the transportation of their daughter to and from tournaments. Spokane Sky recommends that athletes do not drive themselves to and from tournaments. Car-pooling can be arranged with other teammates and is to be encouraged. Please be considerate and arrange a ride exchange or contribute toward the



cost of gas. Please inform coaches of ride arrangements for tournaments outside of the Spokane area.

- Many gyms prohibit food or drink other than water in the court areas. Teams may be penalized by the tournament site director if parents or team supporters ignore this rule.

Player Rules:

- If a player knows that she will miss a tournament, be late or have to leave early from a tournament, it is her responsibility to notify the coach as soon as a conflict is identified.
- All athletes are required to be in the gym, ready to warm-up, at the scheduled start time set up by their head coach. Usually this will be when the gym opens, one hour prior to the start of the first match.
- Players are expected to avoid displaying negative emotions during matches. Arguing with the officials will not be tolerated.
- All athletes are required to stay at the tournament until the team has been released by one of the coaches. We play as a team, and we will leave the event as a team.

Officiating:

All USAV tournaments are at least partially self-officiated. Officiating at tournaments is the shared responsibility of the entire team, including coaches. All players are required to help with the line judging, scorekeeping, score flipping, and down officiating.

- The coach may rotate officiating responsibilities but will often only use the most experienced scorekeepers.
- No headsets or cell phones are to be used during officiating assignments. This also includes cell phones at the scorekeeper's table.

Team Area & Cooler:

Upon arrival, the team will identify a team area where the girls can leave their bags and hang out between playing and officiating. The area may be a room, table or simply a spot in a hallway. Either way, the team area represents our club and should be kept neat and organized at all times. Most girls will bring some type of blanket and/or pillow, homework, a book, an iPod or other items to help pass the time between matches. Remember, the team area is not secure and valuables should be left in the open at your own risk. Also, be sure to properly dispose of any trash and leave the area as we found it when the tournament is over.

Most tournaments do not offer concessions. Spokane Sky teams will organize a team cooler with items assigned for each player to bring to that tournament. The food will be kept in our team area and everyone associated with our team will be welcome to use the team cooler. We do ask that you let the players have first access to the items since they must coordinate meals and snacks with their playing and officiating schedule.

Post-Season Play:

Teams may attend tournaments beyond the regular season schedule based upon consensus of parents and players. The actual costs attributed to post-season would then be divided among those involved and would be in addition to regular club dues.

Stars & Spikes Tournament

Spokane Sky hosts the Stars and Spikes Tournament during the last weekend in February and the first weekend in March. The tournament supports the club as well as funds our scholarship program. Families have two responsibilities with regards to the tournament.

- Families are expected to donate their time with helping with set-up for the tournament on the Friday before each tournament weekend.
- Our Sky teams will stay to the end of each tournament that they participate in. After their last match, our teams will assist with



officiating for out of town teams and help with cleanup and/or teardown of the gym.

Travel

Spokane Sky's travel policy places the responsibility of most aspects of travel to tournaments and supervision of athletes on their parents. Parents are responsible for all costs for travel and meals for themselves as well as their daughter.

Chaperones:

The chaperone position is required for all USAV teams and they are listed on the team roster. The chaperone must attend the coaches meeting at the beginning of the tournament and those persons are responsible for our players' behavior when the coaches are not present at the team cooler area. Spokane Sky does not task chaperones to be responsible for player travel to tournament sites or for player behavior while at hotels nor are chaperone travel expenses covered by the club.

Hotel Policies:

- Our policy is that players will stay with their parents when traveling requires the team to stay in a hotel. If a player will not have a parent at the tournament then the parent should make arrangements with another female parent or guardian on the team to stay with that family. In no case will a player stay in a room by herself.
- While not a requirement, we prefer to have the team stay together in the same hotel if a family will be using a hotel. If that family has friends or other family in that community they can stay with them if they desire to do so.
- All players are expected to be in their rooms and in bed at curfew. Unless a coach has designated a specific time, the default curfew will be 10:00 pm.
- Though your hotel is your temporary home, it is also the temporary home of many others. You must respect the needs of others by keeping your voice down throughout the hotel.
- No boys outside of your family are allowed in your hotel room at any point, for any reason.
- Athletes may not leave the hotel area at any time without permission from their parent or the parent that they are staying with. Athletes should never be alone. Use the buddy system.
- An athlete found in breach of the USAV Code of Conduct (use of drugs/alcohol or possession of weapons) will be sent home immediately at the expense of the parent or guardian.
- An athlete who damages any property at a hotel or lodging will be personally responsible for damages.

Driving Policies:

- As a general rule, players who are 17 years or older may drive to tournaments in Spokane or Kootenai Counties. Outside of these areas, players are required to be driven by a parent or guardian. We do realize that this is not always possible and communication with the head coach is required for exceptions to this rule.
- At no time may a player ride alone with a coach of the opposite sex unless traveling with the entire team or a portion of the team.

Team Fees & Billing

Team Fee:

Team fees vary within the club and compared to other clubs based on how much your team practices and the tournament schedule that your coach selects. Your daughter's team fee includes:

- Admin Fee – covers registration for staff, equipment, website, tax preparation, etc.
- Coaching Fee – covers coaching stipends for head and assistant coaches.
- Gym Fee – covers costs for practice gyms.
- Travel – covers hotel, mileage and meal per diem for coaching staff (not for players).
- Uniform – covers jerseys and warm-ups for players.

Your daughter's team fee does not include the following expenses:

- Any travel expenses or meals for players or their parents.

- Team cooler expenses
- USAV membership for players.
- Apparel or accessories such as spandex, warm-up shirts, kneepads, shoes, socks or gym bags/backpacks.

Billing and Payment Policies:

- **Responsible Party** - The parent or guardian who signs the participation agreement and the USAV Letter of Intent is liable for any and all fees, dues, and charges for goods and services incurred by the participant. By signing the agreement, the responsible party accepts liability and agrees to be bound by the terms of the agreement. The agreements for all sibling participants, regardless of which parent or guardian signs as the responsible party, will be treated as one account for the purposes of this liability.
- **Late Fees or Returned Item Fees** - A \$30.00 late fee will be assessed to any account if the payment is not received within 10 days of the stated due date. In the event a check or credit card draft used to pay fees is returned to Spokane Sky or refused for payment regardless of the reason for refusal, a \$30.00 service fee will be assessed to the participant's account and a cashier's check or money order will be required for all further payments.
- **Refunds** – If the participant becomes disabled or so severely injured while playing or practicing with the club that she cannot practice or compete for more than 6 weeks then a refund will be given. The responsible party will still be required to pay all incurred costs prior to injury to include USAV membership and uniforms. The club will return any unused portion of prepaid fees to the responsible party within 10 business days.
- **Statements** - Participants will receive written statements of amounts payable for fees and services used by the participant. Accounts may be paid by credit card at the Club Parent Meeting but must be paid by check, money order or certified funds after that.
- **Payments** – Accounts may be paid by credit card at the Club Parent Meeting but must be paid by check, money order or certified funds after that. Checks should be made out to Spokane Sky VBC. Please write the players name in the memo line on any checks. Under no circumstances should payments be given to coaches. Cash should never be mailed. Payments should be mailed to the club post office box.

Spokane Sky VBC

PO Box 31022

Spokane, WA 99223

- **Payment Schedule** – U12 and Youth teams should pay the full balance of their team fee at the Club Parent Meeting. For U13 and older teams a \$500 deposit is due at the Club Parent Meeting. The balance is broken up into two equal payments that will be paid on January 15th and February 15th.
 - Spokane Sky will discount the team fee of U13 and older teams by 5% if a single lump sum payment for the team fee is made at the Club Parent Meeting.
- **Payment Plan** – If a monthly payment plan is necessary for your family please contact the Treasurer to make arrangements.
- **Delinquent Payments** – A player who is delinquent with payments will not be placed on the tournament roster. Players not on the tournament roster are not able to play and may not sit on the bench during tournaments. Players are still able to participate in practice. Accounts that remain unpaid after May 1st will be considered “Not in Good Standing” and reported to the Evergreen Region office of USAV which may affect a players participation during the subsequent club season.

Scholarships and Need-Based Aid

Club volleyball has expenses that are related to team fees as well as the travel-associated costs that come with participation with our older age group teams. We are committed to the goal that no deserving athlete will be prevented from being in the club for lack of funds.

Stars & Spikes Tournament:

This is the tournament that we host and the proceeds from tournament entry fees provide our club with money for equipment, coaching education and scholarships. The tournament also provides us with opportunities for fundraising through food and apparel concessions.

Fundraising:

In addition to the Stars & Spikes Tournament, Sky parents may conduct a number of individual fund raising events during the season. Proceeds from these fundraisers go directly to the individual athlete's account. Participation in an individual fund raising activity is strictly voluntary.

Scholarships:

Every club season, Spokane Sky may award scholarship money to one or more families needing assistance with an athlete's fees. Families will be required to fill out an application, which can be requested from the Club Director or the Treasurer. The amount available every year fluctuates and all funds are distributed at the discretion of our Board and Club Director. In the event that an athlete is voluntarily or involuntarily removed from the team, the responsible party for that athlete must pay back the full scholarship amount.

Communication

Routine Team Communication

The primary way that you will receive communication from your coach or the club director will be through email. If a last minute change occurs with a practice or with a tournament we will try to text out that information or use our team parents to call parents directly. Billing information will be sent by US mail. It is critical that you provide the club with all email addresses where you want information sent as well as cell phone numbers for both parents and the player. If changes occur, please update the Club Director.

Our expectation from parents and players is that immediate communication (about something in the next 4 hours) be made to coaches by text. If the subject is further in the future we recommend email. We also recommend that you follow-up up any important verbal communication with an email to act as a confirmation and reminder.

Website

Our website (www.spokaneskyvbc.com) has a lot of information and resources for parents or players. A directory exists on the website with email and phone numbers of all board members and coaches as well as our mailing address. Parents will be asked to sign a release to post player names, pictures or recruiting information on the website. A players home address or other contact information will never be posted on the website.

Social Media & Facebook

Spokane Sky has a Facebook page and we encourage you to post the page and update everyone with results and pictures of our players and teams.

Social media can sometimes have a negative role and we would encourage players and parents to not use social media in a way that would be disruptive to team chemistry and cohesion. A good rule of thumb is to not post anything that you would not feel comfortable saying directly to the team or a particular person.

Player to Coach

Both players and coaches are responsible for establishing a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Bringing up a problem can be very difficult for a player but this is one of those life skills that sports can teach. Parents may need to push their daughter to take the first step though. Our coaches work to be approachable and to create a safe environment for player to bring up concerns.

Player to Player

It is our expectation that if a conflict arises between players on a team then it gets resolved outside of practice/tournaments time, if possible, so as to minimize the affect that it can have on the chemistry of the team. It is important for players to realize that they do not have to like everyone on the team or be friends

with them but they can still respect their contribution to the team. If the conflict is not reconcilable then it is our expectation that the players involved should not aggravate the problem by involving other players or parents on the team with gossip, rumors or attacking people on Facebook or in other forms of social media.

Parents to Coach

Spokane Sky wants to encourage appropriate communication between our parents and the coaching staff of their daughter's team. What is appropriate communication?

- **Any information about your daughter's health.** Recent illnesses, medical restrictions relative to practice, allergies, medication needs are all examples of important information that we want you to communicate to your coaches.
- **Any information about your daughter's emotional health.** It may be important for your coach to know if your daughter is struggling in school or had a recent death in the family or is dealing with another emotionally charged issue outside of volleyball. Without this context, your daughter's behavior in practice or during a tournament may be interpreted as being lazy, unfocused or disrespectful.
- **A quick heads up that your daughter is struggling to talk with the coaches.** This is appropriate if it is only a head's up and not a detailed email. Remember that we to begin this conversation with the player first.
- **Your positive experiences with the coach or the team.** If we are doing things right then reinforce that by letting us know.
- **Your willingness to become more involved.** If you want to help with pictures, video, fundraising or other activities to support your team and the club then let us know!

There are topics of communication with your daughter's coaches which are not appropriate or where there is a more appropriate venue to make that communication.

- **Conversations about play time.** If your daughter is receiving playing time

How Parents can be Great Communicators

- **Recognize the commitment that your coach has made to your team.** Your coaches are dedicating many hours to your team often with the sacrifice of vacation time or time with their family. They are not coaching because of the money.
- **Make early, positive contact with your coach.** Introduce yourself and extend an offer to help. There are many times when parents can help with equipment or shagging balls.
- **Recognize your coach when positive things happen.** Most coaches only hear from parents when they have a complaint. Fill their emotional tank and let them know when they do something well.
- **Don't put your daughter in the middle.** Avoid sharing your disapproval of the coach with your daughter. Divided loyalties between the coach and the parent(s) do not create an environment where your daughter will play her best. Instead, set up a time to talk with the coach.
- **Don't coach your daughter in practice or at matches.** Players struggle with multi-tasking during games and providing instruction will create confusion. Let your coach do his or her job.
- **Be your daughter's most vocal cheerleader!** Focus on the positive things your daughter is doing. Remember that to be positive you must have a positive adjective in what you say. "Pass the ball!" is not an example of being positive. Instead, try "Good effort! Let's get this next ball!" Let your coach address any errors or mistakes.
- **Cheer on the whole team not just your daughter!**
- **Encourage other parents on the team to honor the game by following the suggestions outlined above.** This is how parents can model good conflict resolution skills for their daughters.

consistent with this handbook and the expectations set forth by your coach at the player/parent meeting at the beginning of the season, and your daughter has not discussed her playing time or her role on the team with her coach first, it is inappropriate for you to do so. Before approaching the coach yourself, encourage your daughter to talk to her coach about what she can do to help the team and earn more court time or ask the coach to more clearly define her role on the team. If after this conversation, there are still concerns, then a conversation with the coach, parent, and player may be appropriate. Request a meeting with the coach. The player must be present at the meeting unless there is a very good reason for her not to be.

- **Other players on the team.** Your personal opinions of other player's attitudes, skill, performance, or conduct are not appropriate topics of conversation for you to have with your daughter's coach. There are some exceptions with regards to code of conduct. A team chaperone should inform the coaches of any issues that arise on the team relative to tournament rules or club travel policies. Any issues relative to drugs, alcohol or weapons should be brought up with the head coach immediately. Please use your best judgment here, and understand that if you cross a line, the coach will let you know immediately that this is an inappropriate topic of conversation.
- **Coaching technique, tactics, systems, etc.** These are all issues that are not open for discussion or negotiation. There are opportunities with end of season parent evaluations to provide feedback on these topics to the coaching staff, the Board and the Club Director.
- **Poor Sportsmanship.** The Club Director will not tolerate aggressive parent behavior toward any of coaches, coaches of other clubs, parents, or officials. If a parent exhibits this type of behavior, they will be appropriately sanctioned, which may include being asked to not attend tournaments in the future or even dismissal from Spokane Sky.

Finding the Best Time to Talk

In looking for a good outcome to any meeting with your coach it is important to find the best time and setting for the conversation to occur. Here are some guidelines for finding the best time to talk.

- Little problems are easier to fix than big ones and little problems have a way of getting bigger when not addressed. If there is a question about what a player needs to do to play more, don't wait for half the season to begin the conversation.
- Don't ask to meet during practice or during a tournament. Your coach will not meet with you at this time. Before or after practice is usually the best time. Please allow plenty of time for the meeting.
- The 24-hour rule is a good rule because it works! If there is any emotion to an issue then wait at least 24 hours after the issue before having a meeting.
- Provide a little prep for your coach but not too much before the meeting. Let your coach know why you want to meet but don't send a lengthy email. Emails or long phone messages tend to be too emotional and accusatory. Avoid that with just a brief note or conversation.

Evaluation Process

Spokane Sky believes that player and parent feedback is critical to the growth and development of our coaching staff as well as to the continual improvement of the club as an organization. To that end we have two mechanisms in place to solicit your anonymous feedback. The first is a form submission page on our website at www.spokaneskyvbc.com. Comments and feedback on this page will be forwarded to the Club Director. The second mechanism is a parent or player evaluation form that will be given during the last week of the regular season and collected at practice or during the last tournament of the season.

Our goal is to obtain constructive, actionable feedback and we welcome your honest feedback. We ask that you be constructive with your feedback as we will provide this to your daughter's coaches. Personal attacks or venting are not welcome. Consider the type of evaluation you would want as a player or from your supervisor at work.

Grievance Procedures

Knowing when and how to communicate with the team's coach or the club to resolve a conflict is a concern for almost every player and every parent at some time during the season. We think the ability to confront

and discuss potentially emotional topics is an absolutely necessary skill for negotiating conflict within one's life. However, we also realize there are times a problem needs to be addressed and the player cannot bring herself to approach the coach. In this case, we HIGHLY encourage the parents, in a spirit of collaboration with the coach, to produce the best environment for the player, to bring the issue to the coach's attention, or to the Club Director's attention. Please do not let problems fester – it only makes things worse for everyone in trying to resolve issues.

Procedure Steps:

Specifically, if you as a parent, or your athlete as a participant on a Spokane Sky team, have concerns about Spokane Sky policies or actions, the procedures to follow are, in this order:

1. The athlete should talk to the coach about the matter.
 - a. It is understood at the younger ages (U13 or younger) sometimes the parent will be the first contact with the coach.
 - b. If the matter remains unresolved, or if the athlete has reasonable concern that talking to the coach will not resolve the matter, then;
2. The parent should talk to the coach.
 - a. Parents and/or athletes should call the coach on the phone or email the coach to schedule a meeting.
 - b. Meetings need to be at times and locations other than tournament. If a parent approaches a coach during a tournament, we have instructed our coaches to refuse to discuss any controversial matter, to refer the parent to the Club Director, and to walk away from the parent.
 - c. We ask that any meetings be at least 24 hours after the reason for that meeting.
 - d. The recommended time for a parent or athlete to talk to a coach about a problem is a previously arranged time either before or immediately after a scheduled practice.
 - e. In certain situations, we may ask the athlete to attend the meeting also.
 - f. If the matter still remains unresolved, or if the parent has reasonable concern that talking to the coach will not resolve the matter, then;
3. The parent should talk to the Club Director and request a meeting with the coach, the Club Director and the Parent Representative.
4. If the parent or the athlete is not satisfied by the action taken by the Club Director, they may request, in writing, that the Spokane Sky Executive Board review the matter.
 - a. The Board may, at its sole discretion, review or refuse to review the matter.
 - b. The Board will not review coaching decisions, training regimes or skill development.

We encourage parents to approach us earlier rather than later about concerns they have. There is little we can do to rectify a situation that is not brought to our attention until the end of the season. It is much better to have open lines of communication about problems as soon as they arise.

Other Grievance Policies:

Spokane Sky will not tolerate any hostile, aggressive confrontation between a parent and any official, any other parent, any athlete or any coach, regardless of whether the coach, athlete or other parent is a member of Spokane Sky or not. Violation of this policy may result in the athlete being dismissed from Spokane Sky.

It is inappropriate and undesirable for an athlete or a parent to approach other Spokane Sky parents and athletes to complain about a problem the athlete or parent has with a Spokane Sky coach, about objections to coaching decisions, or about disagreements with an administrative decision. Asking uninvolved persons to take sides on an issue is unfair to the third parties, to the team and to the club. Competitive team athletics, by its very nature, creates situations where everyone may not be happy all the time. For the psychological health of the athletes and the club as a whole, grievances need to be handled between the parties involved and the decision-makers in the situation, meaning, talk to the coach or talk to the appropriate Board representative.

We strongly encourage any member who is approached and asked to listen to or express an opinion about matters between two other parties in the Club to suggest to the complaining party that he or she needs take the matter up with the coach in question, or the Club Director, and refuse to listen further.

Sexual & Physical Abuse Policies

Spokane Sky recognizes that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment with athletes are illegal and unethical, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Sexual abuse and harassment is defined as, but not limited to, repeated comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature. This includes demanding sexual favors in exchange for promotions, unwelcome touching of any kind, unwanted letters, telephone calls, texts or email of a personal nature, unwarranted inquiries about personal life or sexual habits, repeated jokes with sexual content, and sexual comments about a person's appearance or body.

Spokane Sky will not tolerate sexual or physical abuse of any of its staff or of participants. Spokane Sky regards the safety of the young athletes entrusted to our care and instruction as our highest priority. We do not tolerate physical behavior that compromises that priority. We monitor activities and interactions to try to prevent miscommunications that cause discomfort to any of our athletes or parents.

Spokane Sky will not tolerate hazing. Hazing is defined as any intentional act that endangers the mental or physical health of one person or a group of people, by another person or group of people, for the purpose of group acceptance or membership. Hazing behavior would include but is not limited to: brutality such as beating or striking, excess calisthenics, excessive consumption of food or drink, or intimidating/threatening activities that cause extreme mental stress.

Reporting Complaints

If you see or experience behaviors by a Spokane Sky coach, board member or chaperone that you believe to be inappropriate, report it immediately to either the Head Coach or Club Director. All facts will be written down and a file will be started. All complaints will be investigated. Any employee or volunteer found to be in violation of the sexual and physical abuse policy will be subject to discipline, which may include dismissal. There will be no retaliation against any complainants or witnesses who participate in an investigation of an abuse charge.

End of Season Issues

Spokane Sky's season runs as long as is defined in the tryout flier for each team. Players are expected to be committed to the team for the entire season whether that season ends in March or goes through Festival, Junior Olympics or AAU Nationals. Several issues arise at the end of the season.

- Players may be released to play for other post-season teams if their team fees and all expenses are paid in full. No player will be released to play for another team unless she is in good standing.
- Refunds of unused money for the team will be refunded no more than 4 weeks after the end of that team's season. It is Spokane Sky's policy to refund unused tournament expenses including entry fees and coach travel expenses.

Contributors & References

I would like to thank the Sky parents whose pictures of their teams are used in this handbook, specifically Dave Latwesen and Eric Woodard. I would like to also acknowledge the following clubs whose parent education materials proved helpful and inspirational in developing this handbook:

- Minnesota Select Volleyball
- Puget Sound Volleyball Academy
- Front Range Volleyball Club

Spokane Sky VBC Athlete Code of Conduct

My primary goal is to become the best player that I can be. I am responsible for my own actions and behavior. I am fully committed to Spokane Sky and agree that:

Attitude:

- I will conduct myself in a manner that is respectful to me, my team and to Spokane Sky VBC.
- I will commit to my team by getting adequate sleep, eating a healthy diet, and abstaining for alcohol, illegal drugs or tobacco.
- I will play with full effort and intensity.

Communication:

- I will avoid criticism of my teammates, as I believe no one is trying to make a mistake.
- I will avoid giving unsolicited coaching tips to teammates and defer responsibility to my coaches.
- I will refrain from posting or communicating negative comments about other players, coaches, parents or the club via text, email or social media.

Coachability:

- I will accept decisions by my coaches knowing that everyone cannot start. I will accept my role on the team and do what it takes for the team to succeed.

Practice:

- I will manage my time to meet my commitments to my team, my family, my classes and my other commitments.
- I will proactively contact my coach as far as ahead of time if I am unable to make it to practice or a tournament.
- I will commit to being ready to step on the floor at the scheduled practice start time. That means I will have to get to practice at least 15 minutes ahead of time so that I can change and get ready.

Other:

- I agree to allow Spokane Sky VBC to utilize any photograph of me created from my participation in USA Volleyball sanctioned events or programs, without my advance approval of such use, and without financial or other compensation due.

Athlete/Player Agreement & Consent

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to the policies, procedures, and code of conduct requirements as set forth in the Spokane Sky Parent/Player Handbook. As evidenced by my signature, I certify that I have read and understand all of the foregoing and consent to abide by the rules set forth therein.

Player Name (printed) _____

Player Signature _____ Date _____

Spokane Sky VBC Parent Code of Conduct

Parents are crucial to the success of Spokane Sky and their daughter's club volleyball experience. Spokane Sky requires that the parent(s) of any player in our club sign this code of conduct contract. I agree that:

Safe Play:

- I will inform the coach of any physical disability, condition, or ailment that may affect the safety of my daughter or the safety of others.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and abusive behavior and I will refrain from their use at all tournaments and practices.

Sportsmanship:

- I will respect the officials and their authority during games. I understand that many of our officials are coaches or junior players. I will not yell or scream at officials and leave it up to my daughter's coach to resolve issues with the official or scorekeeper.
- I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to sulking, being passively aggressive, showing hostility or resorting to violence.
- I will not judge my daughter or the team's success just in terms of winning. I understand that even in defeat, the team can learn from the experience.

Coaching:

- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices unless I am the official coach. I will avoid yelling instructions to the players during the game.
- I understand that playing time will be afforded to all players, but not necessarily in equal proportions. Playing time is the sole decision of the coach and may be influenced by attendance, tardiness, discipline, and ultimately by ability in playing well in pressure situations.
- I will respect my daughter's time with her coaches, and will wait until the team is released before I interact with her.

Communication:

- I understand that my daughter should approach the coach if she has problems or concerns first and I will encourage her to do so.
- I understand that there are times when I feel I need to speak immediately to the coach. I will wait 24 hours after the triggering event so as to make that conversation as productive as possible.
- I hereby authorize Spokane Sky VBC to post my daughter's name, picture, present school, year of graduation, height, uniform number and position on the Spokane Sky website without my advance approval of such use, and without financial or other compensation due.

Parent/Guardian Agreement & Consent

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to the policies, procedures, and code of conduct requirements as set forth in the Spokane Sky Parent/Player Handbook. As evidenced by my signature, I certify that I have read and understand all of the foregoing and consent to abide by the rules set forth therein. In addition, I certify, that as a parent/guardian of this athlete/player, have explained to my daughter the aforementioned stipulated conditions and their ramifications, and I consent to her participation in this program under the Evergreen Region of USA Volleyball in which she is a member. I agree to pay the team fees according to the schedule set forth by Spokane Sky, allowing my daughter to participate in this program.

Parent Name (printed) _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____