

Arkansas Juniors Storm Grievance Policy and Procedures

Note: The following grievance procedure is designed to restore sanity to the sometimes insane world of youth sports...and allow our volunteer coaches to work with athletes while respecting the wishes of their parents. Families who are not comfortable with this procedure should consider joining another J.O. volleyball program. The most painful conflicts in our 40 year history have occurred when a temperamental parent approached a coach immediately following the end of a tough volleyball match (typically a loss)...and absolutely nothing positive was accomplished. There are better ways to deal with these issues without alienating the triple partnership among the athlete, parent & coach. One of our required registration forms is a document that governs the interaction among these parties.

Knowing when to communicate and how to communicate with your athlete's coach is a concern for almost every parent at some time during the season. Most often the concern is how to inquire about issues surrounding playing time.

In the Arkansas Juniors Storm Volleyball program, we encourage the athlete to talk to the coach when she has a problem about her playing time, or if she is unclear about what the coach expects from her either in practice or in competition. The appropriate attitude is for the athlete to ask the coach what she needs to do to get more opportunities to play in matches. If the athlete is too emotional to discuss the problem in an adult manner, the conversation should be delayed until the athlete is ready to do so. Parents can best help their athlete by helping her set some goals to achieve more opportunities.

When parents have a problem that is specific to their own athlete, we also encourage them to first talk to the coach. What coaches will not do is discuss "coaching decisions." "Coaching decisions" include, among other things, specific match decisions (who played when, who was subbed out and when, etc.) The amount of time any given athlete is on the court is the result of a complex determination, in that coach's opinion, of the athlete's ability, the athlete's potential, the athlete's position, the team's needs at the moment, and the team's needs in the future. The coach will not be required to defend his /her thought process or conclusions in these determinations, and it is improper for a parent to request it.

In addition, we instruct coaches not to discuss any athlete other than the parent's own, or the actions of any other Arkansas Juniors Storm coach. If you, as a parent, have legitimate concerns about a coach other than your athlete's coach, or with an athlete other than your own; you need to address the Club Director. Please note again that "coaching decisions" are not, in our opinion, legitimate concerns.

Specifically, the procedures to follow if you as a parent, or your athlete as a member of an Arkansas Juniors Storm team, have concerns about Arkansas Juniors Storm policies or actions, are, in this order:

1. The athlete should speak to or meet with the coach about the matter. If the matter remains unresolved, or if the athlete has reasonable concern that speaking to the coach will not resolve the matter,
2. The parent should speak to or meet with the coach. Parents and/or athletes are expected to call the coach on the phone to set a meeting. Meetings are to be at times and locations other than tournaments. If a parent during a tournament approaches a coach, we have instructed the coach to refuse to discuss any controversial matter, and to walk away from the parent. The recommended time for a parent and/or athlete to talk to a coach about a problem is a previously arranged meeting time either before or immediately after a scheduled practice.
3. The parent may speak to Club Director and request a meeting with the coach and Director. In certain situations, we may ask the athlete to attend the meeting, also. Meetings should be previously arranged. Meetings will not be scheduled during or at a tournament site. The Coach and/or the Director will not engage in discussions about coaching decisions.

It is inappropriate for an athlete or a parent to approach other Arkansas Juniors Storm members about a problem the athlete or parents having with an Arkansas Juniors Storm coach, about objections to coaching decisions, or about disagreement with an administrative decision.

Asking uninvolved persons to take sides in an issue is unfair to the third party 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 teams and the Club as a whole, grievances need to be handled between the parties involved and the decision-makers in the situation.

Any member who is approached and asked to listen to or express an opinion about matters between two other parties in the Club is strongly encouraged to refer the complaining party to take the matter up with either the coach in question, and/or the Club Director. Repetitive complaining by the athlete(s) or other third parties that interferes with the Club's efforts to pursue its stated pledge and purpose may be cause, in the sole determination of the Club, to ask a member to resign.

Player's Signature _____ Parent's Signature _____