



2024 Player/Parent Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to an exciting season of Melrose JO Volleyball!

As a club, we strive to provide the best resources for our program by offering a fun and positive environment for you to grow as an individual and learn to be a team-oriented player. JO season is a time for players to learn, improve and develop as athletes.

JO season is important for our volleyball program; this is where we work on essential skills, team building, offensive/defensive systems and game situations. Most importantly, however, is for the JO season to be a fun experience that will help in developing personal skills and understanding for the game of volleyball.

This handbook is your guide to the Melrose JO Volleyball Club. Here, you will have access to guidelines, expectations and information about playing time, team schedules and our club philosophy. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU READ THIS HANDBOOK WITH YOUR PARENTS AND FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT JO VOLLEYBALL IS ALL ABOUT.**

If you have questions about anything that is covered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact your coach or any leader in JO. We are very happy that you have decided to make the commitment for yourself and the team, and that you have decided to participate in Melrose JO Volleyball!

Sincerely,

Emily Reller
Head Volleyball Coach, Melrose Area High School

Practice Expectations and Information

In an effort to get as much out of the JO season as possible, there are some essential expectations set to ensure that this is an experience of growth, development and improvement. We expect all players to abide by these expectations at all times as they represent our school, community, and their teammates.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- **Each girl in JO will receive a practice ball when they reach the 13's level. They will be required to bring this ball to ALL games and tournaments.**
 - **The ball is purchased by the JO Volleyball Program.**
 - **They will keep this ball with them for the duration of their time in Melrose JO Volleyball.**
 - **This will help in learning:**
 - **Responsibility**
 - **Taking care of something that belongs to them**
 - **And also, keeping the girls active at home because they will have access to a ball at any time**
- **HAVE FUN!** Practice is a time to challenge and prepare for real game situations, but it's also a time for fun! Coaches will make practice a time to learn and grow, but also to enjoy playing the game of volleyball.
- Make every effort to attend each practice – we understand there will be conflicts from time to time, but it is important that practice is a priority. If you cannot make a practice, it is essential to communicate to your coach as soon as possible.
- Come to practice ready to learn and work. We will likely have 10 or fewer practices, so it's imperative that we make the best use of our time!
- Take the direction of coaches. We are lucky to have quality coaches in our program that have a lot of playing and coaching experience. We request that players are respectful and coachable.
- Work hard during every drill. Practice is a time to work like you would in a game. Coaches will explain the drill before it starts, and players should ask questions and work to run the drill at their best effort.
- Leave cell phones and personal situations out of practice! We need to be focused when we practice, and this means leaving distractions away from the group time. Keep cell phones stored during all practices.
- Unexcused absences from practice will result in sitting for one set at the next tournament. Two practices missed will equal two missed sets, etc. Additional missed practices may result in removal from the team. We need players to be committed.



PRACTICE INFORMATION

Practices throughout the season will vary by team. Team will generally practice once per week, possibly twice pending gym availability. Practice schedules will be posted on the www.melrosevolleyball.com website.

Practices will start for 11-14s in mid-February and later for 15-17s teams because of winter JV/Varsity level activities. We will do our best to schedule practices during times that have little conflicts with other activities but understand that open gym space is very limited.

Tournament Information

As a club, we will do our best to enroll our teams into the best quality tournaments that we can find. Additionally, we will work to look for tournaments as close to home as possible.

Each age group may have a different number of events. 11-12s will play in four events, 13-17s will play in five this year.

Tournaments are an opportunity to help our teams grow as much as possible throughout the season. Overall, we want to play as much as possible without causing conflicts with families, Winter/Spring sports, or other school sanctioned events.

PLAYING TIME

- Each player will play during pool play. This does not mean that each player will see the same playing time, but they will have the opportunity to play in a role that the coach feels is appropriate for the player with the teams' best interest in mind.
- Tournament play will not be equal. We will go into tournament play with the idea that we will put the line-up on the floor that the coach feels will give their team the best opportunity to be successful.
 - **Our goal at tournaments is to have fun, but we also want to be competitive and give each team its best chance at winning.**
- Unexcused absences from practices will result in loss of playing time at tournaments. The more touches on the ball each player gets, the more improvement they will acquire throughout the season.
- The coach for each team will have the final say as far as playing time at tournaments and they will follow the JO club guidelines.

The goal of each team is to put the best possible line-up together for the team to succeed. This will help Melrose Volleyball to grow as a program and the individual players to become comfortable in their positions. We want to use JO Volleyball as a catalyst for the regular season, so there may be some adjustments to the line up

made throughout the season. This will give the coaches insight into what certain players can do, and where they may be most beneficial to the program during the regular season.

Club Philosophy & Additional Information

PHILOSOPHY

We are working hard to develop a consistent winning program in Melrose. This requires commitment from players and parents. Practice is extremely important to developing as an individual and working with teammates. We would like each player to grow throughout the season and become more skilled in volleyball.

Come to practice and games willing to learn and grow, but also to cheer and be positive for your teammates. Each player has a role, and some may have more time on the court, but all players are essential to the team's success. Be positive, take direction from your coach, learn at every opportunity and cheer the success of your teammates.

The JO season is a great time to learn new skills! Some players may be asked to play positions that they are not familiar with or comfortable playing. We can use our practice and tournament time to work with line-ups and try players at different positions than what they are used to playing.

For the younger teams (11-12s), the coaches will start to implement skills that will help prepare them to play Junior High volleyball. For most of our younger players, JO will be their first experience with volleyball, and we want to make it a positive one. The coaches will emphasize skills in passing, serving, setting, hitting and team play. Along with skill development, we also want the JO experience to be a place where our younger players can gain a love of the game!

For our older teams (13-17s), the coaches will emphasize skills to bring Melrose Volleyball to a higher level. We will be introducing different defensive and offensive systems, work on higher level skills in serving, passing, setting, hitting and defense, and also look at preparing our teams for the fall season.

It is our goal to keep all the players participating with their own grade level. Due to the number of players at each level, there may need to be a little bit of shuffling. Some players may need to play "up". We will never ask players to play at a grade level lower than their own grade. Again, we will do our best to keep all the grades together as much as possible. Moving up players will often be dependent on position. Please do not read too much into any shuffling of players; oftentimes players will feel discouraged if they don't move up. Remember, decisions are made that will be the best for the TEAM, not the INDIVIDUAL!

PRIORITIES

JO Volleyball will be a secondary activity for many players. We want athletes at Melrose that understand prioritization of their lives and activities. We encourage players involved in a school sport during the JO season to commit their time to that sport first! **DO NOT MISS A GAME OR PRACTICE FOR THESE ACTIVITIES FOR A JO COMMITMENT.** This is an excused absence. Consider your priorities in this way:

- 1) Family/Personal
- 2) School (Academics)
- 3) School-Sanctioned Activities
- 4) JO Volleyball

INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER ACTIVITIES/SPORTS

Well-rounded athletes need to understand that we want players involved in more than just volleyball. We encourage players to get and stay involved in multiple activities/sports throughout the year and your high school career. Often, the best volleyball players are well-rounded athletes participating in multiple sports.

Therefore, we do not suggest specializing or only being involved in volleyball.

This can and may limit athletic and mental progress. Additionally, being involved in other activities provides lessons in being a good teammate, developing leadership skills, and learning additional skill sets (mentally and physically) that will help develop better volleyball players.

WEATHER GUIDELINES

In the event of inclement weather, the JO Volleyball club director will communicate information to all the players/parents and coaches whether teams will attend a tournament or not. **PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT COACHES directly about whether to attend a tournament or not.** Watch for information on the www.melrosevolleyball.com website for weather related announcements, **and your email**. Of course, parents have the final call on sending players to any tournament, as personal safety is of highest priority.

Fees – Registration – Online Training

Melrose JO Volleyball does everything possible to keep fees affordable for all players/families. We realize JO requires both a time commitment and monetary investment, and both are valuable. We have compared our fees with other local clubs and in many cases, we are nearly half the price to participate from neighboring clubs.

2024 CLUB FEES

- **13-17's - \$190 total for the year**
 - Payable to Melrose JO Volleyball at meeting or before first practice
 - Includes weekly practices
 - Includes 5 tournaments
- **11-12's - \$150 total for the year**
 - Payable to Melrose JO Volleyball at meeting or before first practice
 - Includes weekly practices
 - Includes 4 tournaments

PARENT INVOLVEMENT - WORKING LOCAL TOURNAMENT

To keep fees as low as possible, **\$50 of each player's club fee is subsidized by having parents work for 2-3 hours at our local tournament.** Working a short shift during one of the events is mandatory to receive the \$50 subsidy. Jobs include concessions, collecting spectator fees, etc. Parents will be notified when to work their shift. You are welcome to trade your shift with another parent to another day or time depending on the schedule, and can have another adult work your shift for you. JO Players are not allowed to work the shifts at our tournaments. All JO players will be needed to help run scoreboard, etc. at our tournament on the day they are not playing. **If you fail to work your shift, you will be billed an additional \$50 for 2024 club fees.**

LOCAL TOURNAMENT

This year, we are hosting one tournament weekend over two days. Our home event will be on Saturday and Sunday, April 6-7, 2024.

11-14's: Play on Saturday - Parents/Players work on Sunday

15's-17's: Play on Sunday - Parents/Players work on Saturday

Other tournaments we plan to participate in will be confirmed very soon. Our tentative schedule is on our website.

REGISTRATION

All players are required to register by January 14, 2024.

Melrose JO Registration is available online at www.melrosevolleyball.com. Please register no later than January 14, 2024. Fees are due at the parent/player meeting on January 8 or no later than the first practice.

The JO club has scholarships available to help cover a portion or all fees to participate in 2024. We have limited resources, but please reach out if you would like to apply for a scholarship. We never want finances to be an issue for any player.

IMPORTANT PARENT INFORMATION

Melrose Volleyball Website – www.melrosevolleyball.com

All information for the club and each team will be posted on the website, including dates/times for each practice and tournament. We usually receive the tournament details - location and game times about 5 days prior to the event. Please use the website to locate the information for your player.

As we get into the season, a weekly email will be sent to everyone on our email list. This will share general information and schedules for the week. Please use the website though at your convenience - if you are not finding the information you need, please reach out to the club director at director@melrosevolleyball.com.