

GOLDEN BEAR
VOLLEYBALL



2026 PLAYER & PARENT PACKET

Club Philosophy

First and foremost, Golden Bear is an educational organization. We believe the underlying values we teach are fundamental to players' development as athletes, students, and people. Although one of our goals is to develop teams that will compete for national championships, we recognize the most important lessons we teach extend beyond the gym.

I. How does Golden Bear train to reach its goals?

A. Work Hard

If you want reach your potential, the most important controllable variable is how hard you work. As we strive to win, train for success now and in the future, and foster loving the experience, we keep the focus on a simple concept: ***work hard***.

Social, carefree fun happens spontaneously in the context of a cohesive group bound together by working hard towards a common goal. Consistent with this, we focus on providing the structure where a team can feel proud of its efforts and enjoy their down-time as a reward. Jack Nicklaus (*the* Golden Bear, coincidentally) was once asked whether he ever played golf for fun. His reply: "Fun for me is walking up the 18th at the Masters with a 1-shot lead." At Golden Bear, we seek to inspire the courage to give your all, so you can gain satisfaction from the results, whatever they may be.

B. Individual Technique

The foundation of individual and group success is solid fundamentals. To be great, you have to be able to be good at the little things, *over and over again*. Golden Bear has built teams to heights unequalled in the central Bay Area in part because we have focused on a strong technical foundation. Getting a little better at technique with every repetition is a hallmark of Golden Bear training.

C. Team Systems

Individual skills are woven into a coordinated effort in every phase of the game. Technical proficiency is of limited value unless every player on the floor understands and executes their role. Understanding how each role fits in the bigger picture, and trusting your teammates, is an essential component of learning.

D. Competitive Situations

Performing a skill in a controlled practice setting is building block, but it's not the same as doing it in live play. Simulating game situations in the practice gym introduces the many variables that occur in competition, but allow for many repetitions as well as focused feedback. Weaving individual skills and team concepts into the fabric of game situation is the apex of each skill progression.

E. Competition

While every team competes, Golden Bear looks for more – in several ways. (1) We want to compete harder, just like we practice harder. (2) We want to get more out of competition, by learning at every opportunity. (3) We never put results ahead of effort; if we put the effort into the process, then we improve our chances of reaching our competitive goals.

Things are more likely to go your way when you stop worrying about whether you're going to win or lose and focus your full attention on what's happening right this moment.

— Phil Jackson, Sacred Hoops

II. What's the philosophy on playing time?

Everything at Golden Bear is guided by a simple rule: ***team first***. The corollary to the rule is that no team reaches its potential without every player making a contribution. Each player must also be aware of their importance to the team.

One finger can't lift a pebble. — Hopi saying

A. Team First

This means everyone is working towards the same goals, and they have to put their private agendas aside when they interfere with the team's goals. A team is not a democracy, it's more like a meritocracy. Competitive players all want to play as much as possible, but the attitude we're looking for is "what can I do to help the team?"

B. The importance of every team member.

1. Every player gets opportunities, of two types. First, **every player gets the same opportunities in practice to earn playing time.** Whether in game situations or practice, the coach is responsible for identifying the strongest line-up, which means constant reevaluation. Second, there are opportunities to compete in game situations. The older the team, the more playing time is earned, not given. Whoever is playing best will play the most, but this is always subject to change based on what a player does with the opportunities in practice.

2. Every player has a role. Those players who play less than others are vital parts of a team's success. First, they always have the opportunity to show they can help the team improve. No starting line-up is ever permanent. Also, they can raise the level of practice, maintain the level in games when called upon, or raise the level — thus earning more playing time. When a player isn't happy with their role, the appropriate response is first to be sure they understand what they need to do, then work as hard as possible to effectuate change.

3. Exposure. By the 15's year, recruiting is an important part of club volleyball. Coaches are aware of this and will look for appropriate opportunities to give every player exposure in positive situations. Keep in mind, however, that most recruiting in volleyball is player-initiated. When a player has been corresponding with a program that is in attendance, our coaches will look for opportunities for exposure, provided that it is not at the expense of the team.

III. What does Golden Bear care about besides volleyball?

We do all we can to stay aware of the big picture. This may mean simply keeping one play, one match, or one tournament in *perspective*. This may also mean recognizing that there are values more important than winning which we will follow as we pursue volleyball excellence. We believe our philosophy allows us to remain true to our principles *and* develop great teams and players. Doing things right and doing well go hand-in-hand.

Below are some examples which address specific situations:

A. Academics, Family, & Social Life

As a club volleyball program, we are preparing players for success as student-athletes. That's student first, athlete second. When the time comes for choosing a college, we offer advice for the academic side as well as the athletic. The emphasis on school does not mean that players are encouraged to miss practices for academic reasons. The lessons student-athletes must learn include how to plan ahead, so we expect that players won't miss practices due to a lack of foresight.

B. School Sports

At Golden Bear, we believe as long as a player decides to play a school sport, it is up to the player to set their priorities. What we expect, however, is the player will do everything possible to fulfill their commitment to their Golden Bear team.

C. Personal growth.

There are a number of important lessons that come from playing team sports, especially at the high level at which Golden Bear teams play. Many of these have already been mentioned. Here, however, are a few of the things that we consider important: accepting responsibility, teamwork, communication, challenging yourself, discipline, and working passionately for something. There are a lot more, but the point is just this: we're aware of the big picture, and we try to make it a part of everything we do.

Club Policies

Parents and players should not consider the following to be a complete set of rules. Instead, these policies are representative of the high standards for conduct that we expect of all participants.

- 1.1 Participation is open to all without regard to race, religious beliefs, or national origin.

Players

- 2.1 Players are expected to maintain a courteous manner during all Club activities including practices, travel to and from tournaments, on and off the court. A player whose conduct is deemed improper may be dismissed from practice, a tournament, or the Club entirely.
- 2.2 Possession and/or use of drugs, alcohol, or any regulated substance or item is strictly prohibited and violation of this rule will be grounds for expulsion from the Club without refund of fees.
- 2.3 Each player is responsible for notifying their coach of any physical ailment or injury that may affect their ability to play or to attend a practice.

Communication

- 3.1 Coaches decide the time, place, and manner of feedback and instruction. Parents are requested to consult with coaches if they wish to address these decisions.
- 3.2 Problems that arise should be dealt with in the following order: (1) Player and coach; (2) parent, player, and coach; (3) director, parent, player, and coach. Open communication is everyone's responsibility. All coaches and the director are available to resolve problems. Following the chain of communication allows players to learn to take responsibility for themselves, encourages player-coach communication, and prevents micro-managing of the teams.

- 3.3 *The corollary to 3.2 is this: The director's door is always open. Parents may contact the director if they believe the process described in 3.2 is not appropriate to the situation. No concern is too big or too small.*
- 3.4 The places and times we choose for communication has a great deal to do with its ultimate success. Players and parents should request to meet with the coach to discuss sensitive issues. Before and after practice may be appropriate for brief unemotional discussions, but difficult or emotional situations require separate meetings. Dealing with difficult problems immediately before practice usually does not result in a resolution and can disrupt practice for the player, coach and all team members.
- 3.5 Parents are encouraged to talk with coaches at appropriate times yet should avoid discussing any player/coach conflict situations during competition or in the presence of any team member. **Parents MAY NOT discuss their daughter's or other athletes playing time with the coach on the day of competition, including before or after competition.** Lack of cooperation with this will result in the player being asked to leave with the parent. This subject is loaded with emotion and needs to be dealt with in a meeting with the coach and/or Director at a later time.
- 3.6 Coaches will host question & answer sessions with parents. At least one such meeting will be held during January and February, and thereafter as necessary.
- 3.7 There will probably be situations for every player and parent where you are not entirely happy. In all cases, there are only two permissible actions:
1. Conclude it is not worth raising a fuss; simply let it go.
 2. Talk to the appropriate person about the problem, be it a teammate, a coach, or a parent. Be sure to follow the chain of communication.

3.8 Any other type of response, such as complaining amongst teammates or parents or allowing concerns to grow and fester, is divisive and detrimental to the team.

3.9 Making disruptive or negative comments (whether towards tournament officials, team members, staff or opponents) and parent sideline coaching are not permitted.

Financial

4.1 Any player whose account is not up to date may be prohibited from practice or participation in tournaments.

Club Fees

Team	Dues	Events	Total
17N	\$5,259	\$2,800	\$8,059
16N	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
16B	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
15N	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
15B	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
14N	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
14B	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
13N	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
13B	\$5,259	\$1,650	\$6,909
12N	\$3,261	\$800	\$4,061
12B	\$3,261	\$800	\$4,061
11N	\$3,261	\$100	\$3,361
16G	\$2,980	\$0	\$2,980
15G	\$2,980	\$0	\$2,980
14G	\$2,980	\$0	\$2,980
13G	\$2,980	\$0	\$2,980
12G	\$2,980	\$0	\$2,980
Boys	\$3,936	\$0	\$3,936

*Events = any tournament other than NCVA League (NCVA non-league for Cubs).

**Optional based on team decision to attend Far Westerns National Qualifier.

Payment Options for 2026 Season (including travel)

1. Option One (pay in full)

Receive a \$50 discount if paying in full via **check or cash @** signing meeting

2. Option Two (2/3 payments)

Due at signing meeting: \$2,000 (or balance).

Due 12/3/25: \$2,000 (or balance).

Due 1/3/26: remaining balance.

3. Option Three (6 equal payments)

Charge 6 monthly payments of:

Nike & Blue Teams= \$1,151.50 to the credit card or checks provided. 12s

Power Teams= \$677 11N= \$560

Gold Teams= \$497 to the credit card or checks provided. *Payments will start on signing day and be followed by 5 consecutive monthly payments.*

Credit card payments are accepted; authorization forms can be downloaded from our website. Credit card authorization forms and checks can be submitted to our business address:

*951-2 Old County Road #161
Belmont, CA 94002*

4.2 When committing to play on a team you are obliged to pay the full basic membership cost. This is because our expenses do not drop when a player leaves a team. **Payment is not on a monthly or pro-rated basis, and refunds will not be given.**

4.3 A valid credit card must be on file. We will not charge it without your approval.

4.4 **Travel**

- 5.1 NCVA tournament (league) registration fees are included in the club dues. Nike teams play Power League, Gold teams play in Premier League, Cubs play Non-League. Other local tournaments may be added at additional expense. Additional tournaments are selected, as appropriate, on a team-by-team basis. Nike teams may incur minimal travel expenses for competition at distant locations within the region.
- 5.2 The estimated costs for additional tournaments represents our current best estimate of the cost of all additional tournaments. Any difference between the cost estimate and the actual cost of the trip will be reflected in a statement after the tournament. You will be credited or billed for any difference between the estimate and the actual cost. See chart (13.1) for breakdown of costs.
- 5.3 Payment for all estimated costs will be made in advance of travel. See the Financial section for details.
- 5.4 Refunds for withdrawal from a tournament: Every player is expected to attend every tournament. Based on this, the club makes payments for travel and lodging which are often not recoverable. If a player withdraws, any costs the Club can recover will be refunded in full, but **there will be no credits for other costs**. Non-refundable airline tickets that result in credits will be turned over to the player. We are compelled to apply this policy to medical reasons or any emergency as well.
- 5.5 **Players may never drive to or from a tournament.**
- 5.6 **All teams travel together to tournaments outside the region.** This includes air and ground transportation to and during the event, meals, and accommodations. Exceptions are made at the club's discretion, when available.
- 5.7 When more than one Golden Bear team travels to the same event, their total expenses will be shared among all teams going to that event, unless a team voluntarily chooses a more expensive itinerary, in which case they will be billed for the difference.
- 5.8 The travel calendar is set by the club. Changes will be considered based on input from team coaches and parents. The club will consider adding additional tournaments contingent on parent feedback.
- 5.9 End of Season Tournament:
- Nike: Junior Nationals or Bay View Classic
 - Gold: Premier Area League Championship
- 5.10 In general, the club does not arrange transportation to tournaments within California or to Reno.
- 5.11 All Golden Bear teams will travel with a parent chaperone. Due to USAV rules, every chaperone (and coach) must undergo a background check. Each Golden Bear team will have one designated chaperone who will attend JOs. At JOs, the official chaperone must be present, although other parents may assist in the duties as permitted by USAV rules. **When a trip includes group air travel (JOQs, Vegas, JOs), the chaperone's airfare will be assumed by the team.** At their own discretion, chaperones may relieve the team of the cost of their airfare. Hotel charges will remain the responsibility of the chaperone. When no parent(s) are willing to chaperone and pay their hotel costs, the team will assume the expense.
- 5.12 We are sensitive to those trying to keep their travel expenses low. As such, we prefer each player pay their own meal expenses. Those who are on a tight budget are understandably resentful when they are expected to pay a share of more expensive meals. There are, however, situations where pay-as-you-go is unnecessary due to the small differences in costs or impractical due to time constraints.
- 5.13 Before and during competition, players will restrict their intake of certain foods, including caffeine and fried foods.

5.14 Parent travel: **Golden Bear will not book travel for parents, with the exception of the team chaperone.** As soon as we choose a team flight, we will communicate this to the team and post it on our website. We will do the same with hotels. Where permitted by the hotel, we will block rooms for parents to call the hotel directly.

6.1 **Fundraising**

The club will offer several fundraising opportunities. We are open for suggestions from successful experiences. Fundraising assists with our ability to offer scholarships and other player based support.

7.1 **Sponsors:** There are always players for whom club volleyball is a financial impossibility. After fundraising options have been exhausted, the club seeks sponsors. If you or someone you know would be able to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact the club. All donations will be kept confidential unless requested otherwise.

Financial Aid

- 8.1 For families in significant financial need. Options include:
- A. Payment plan to spread out payments.
 - B. Fundraising (work shifts, spearheading a campaign.).
 - C. Player-originated sponsorship (players receive 100% of donations acquired).
 - D. Opportunity Fund where Golden Bear will match your sponsorships up to 50% of club dues.
- 8.2 For those receiving Opportunity Fund sponsorship (8.1D above), players and parents must participate in **all fundraising**.
- 8.3 Opportunity Fund process: We do not want finances to be a barrier to playing volleyball. To apply for the opportunity fund fill out the link provided on our website. We have limited opportunity funds budgeted per team depending on the amount of need.

8.3 Within your request the player needs to explain why they should be granted the scholarship and what actions they are going to make to meet the 50% benchmark.

8.4 Financial aid must be based on need, not ability. Otherwise, it makes a player a professional in the eyes of the NCAA. College eligibility, along with eligibility for college athletic scholarships, can be stripped.

8.5 Parents of those receiving scholarships (8.1D above) may not attend tournaments requiring air travel absent special circumstances.

Web Site

9.1 We maintain a web site at www.goldenbearvolleyball.com. This site includes information for college coaches, as well as practice and tournament information. Each team will have their own page and can add content (photos, etc.) as they see fit. Teams will also have their own team calendar and tournament schedule on their page. Also, be sure to follow us and post on Facebook and Instagram.

Physical Therapy and Wellness Services

10.1 We have contracted Thrive Wellness and Physical Therapy Ltd., led by Dr. Sita Wong, PT, DPT to provide physical assessments for each athlete in the club. She will oversee injury rehabilitation and support during practice. She will be onsite for all players one day a week to provide her services. That date and time is TBD.

Administration

11.1 Golden Bear has four senior staff members:

1. Sarah McClendon (directorsarahmc@gmail.com) is the Club Director, responsible for the day-to-day management of the program. Questions or concerns that cannot be addressed by the coaches should be directed to Sarah.
2. Randy Chang (randyc@goldenbearvolleyball.com) is the club's bookkeeper. He keeps track of charges and payments.
3. Justin Caraway (coachjwc@gmail.com) is responsible for overseeing player training and staff development.
4. Ed Cohen is the club's Chief Financial Officer.



Uniforms

12.1 The club will order your full uniform. Please be sure to try on uniforms at the November signing meeting. Your membership fee includes the following items:

- One set of warm-ups (hoodie and sweats)
- Three jerseys (two for Gold teams)
- Two pair of biker shorts (one for Gold teams)
- Full-length tights
- Boys: One set of warm-ups (hoodie and sweats), 2 jerseys, 2 shorts, and a backpack.

12.2 Returning players may need to purchase new gear for 2026. We have changed our warmup and some jerseys. The gear we are keeping (spandex) can be reused from previous years.

12.3 New players will be required to purchase a Nike travel bag at a cost of no more than \$50. This fee will be billed by the club.

12.4 BearWear (Parent Wear) will be available this season! We will be offering an online store starting in December. Parents can have a lot of spirit this season! They can select from many styles and show Golden Bear pride all around town and at tournaments.

13.1 Additional Tournament (“Events”) Breakdown

	<u>11N</u>	<u>12B</u>	<u>12N</u>	<u>13G</u>	<u>13B</u>	<u>13N</u>	<u>14G</u>	<u>14B</u>	<u>14N</u>	<u>15N</u>	<u>16N</u>	<u>17N</u>
California Kickoff	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>	-	<u>\$175</u>	<u>\$175</u>	-	<u>\$175</u>	<u>\$175</u>	<u>\$175</u>	<u>\$175</u>	<u>\$175</u>
JOQ TBA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<u>\$1,150</u>
President’s Day	-	-	-	-	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	-	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>
SoCal JNQ – Vegas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Golden State JNQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Far Western JNQ	-	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>	-	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>	-	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>	<u>\$700</u>
Bay View Classic	-	-	-	-	<u>\$575</u>	<u>\$575</u>	-	<u>\$575</u>	<u>\$575</u>	<u>\$575</u>	<u>\$575</u>	<u>\$575</u>
												-
	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$800</u>	<u>\$800</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$1,650</u>	<u>\$2,800</u>

2024/2025 Proposed Practice Schedule (Subject to change)

November 2nd through December 21st

Sunday Practice

Donahue gym, Berkeley High School

13s & 14s 8:30- 10:30am

15s, 16s, 12s, & 11s 10:30-12:30pm

January through May

Hearst Gym

Berkely High School

Local Gyms to fill holiday closures at Hearst

Schedule attached in age group one sheet

Comprehensive Education

Sports Performance Training

1. For Nike teams in the 13s – 18s, there will be a pre-season sports performance program, designed to build volleyball-specific strength, explosiveness, agility, speed, and prevent injuries.
2. Pre-season training will include Olympic lifting, plyometric work, core strengthening and technical training in volleyball skills. Sports performance training will begin in November after the signing meeting and continue with weekly sessions during January followed by maintenance training for the remainder of the season.
3. All teams' practices will incorporate conditioning for injury prevention and enhanced performance.

Recruiting Workshop – Early February

Golden Bear offers a recruiting workshop for parents and players. **Anyone in the freshman year or later who has not attended a Golden Bear recruiting workshop in the past is required to attend.** The workshop is a comprehensive review of the recruiting process, including an overview of the process, the player's role, NCAA rules, and an thorough Q & A.

Parent/Coach/Administration

1. Golden Bear will offer a seminar covering rules, coaching techniques, and strategies.
2. All teams will offer several team meetings to include players, parents, coaching staff, and (when requested) administration.
3. Club director Sarah McClendon is available for parents interested in helping to improve the Golden Bear program.

Athletic Training and Injury Prevention

Golden Bear employs a Trainer-in-Residence who has regular drop-in hours at practices, free to all Golden Bears. The trainer offers treatment for injuries and chronic conditions, as well as setting up individualized programs for injury prevention and recovery.

Student-Athlete Skills

Sharing our experience as college coaches and student-athletes, we address topics such as time management, stress management, and goal setting (short and long-term).

Practices

1. Golden Bear has “open practices.” With the advance consent of both coaches, players may attend practices of other teams.
2. Additional practices are available on Saturdays for 13s and older. 12s and younger may occasionally add a 3rd practice.
3. At the coach's' discretion, practices may be cancelled due to team fatigue or similar reasons.

Clinics

Justin Caraway, our volleyball specialist, will lead clinics offering specialized skills, position-specific training, and advanced team tactical training. These will in addition to the regular practice schedule. They are scheduled for Sundays. Coaches will send player based on the skill focus for that weekend.

Cubs

Our youth program for ages 11 and under. Our goal is to train technique and a love of the game. Cubs will begin in February. Details will be on our website and disseminated as they become available.

Frequently Asked Tryout Questions

What are the differences between Nike and Gold teams?

Nike teams compete at the highest levels, practice 3 times per week, play in the NCVA Power League, and travel to national tournaments. *Gold* teams practice twice per week, play in the NCVA Premier League (local), and do not travel. Gold teams require less of a time and financial commitment. Gold teams will typically practice twice weekly.

What if a parent cannot attend the November signing meeting?

This meeting is when we will complete the NCVA letter of commitment and uniform sizing. We will also require the first payment at this meeting. Any parent who cannot attend is responsible for communicating with the coaches to complete the paperwork and make payment arrangements.

What are the chances of making a team if you haven't been to a clinic? Can you really evaluate players thoroughly at tryouts?

Coming to clinics makes things easier for the coaches to make decisions, but players being seen at tryouts for the first time still have every opportunity to make a team.

Do you know how many positions are still open?

Every position is open. We do not ask for commitments before tryouts, even if we know a player is good enough to make a team. If we told a player about their chances of making a team, the coach will share that information if asked. We have made no offers to players before tryouts. We are carrying two teams per age group. One Nike and one Gold team. Each team typically has 12 players.

Do you have any biases towards former Golden Bear players?

For better or worse, every Golden Bear player knows they must earn their spot every year. The reason for this is simple: we are committed to making our teams as strong as possible every year. The players who try out here want to play at the highest level possible, and in order to form such teams, the policy must apply to everyone. *However, our experience with anyone we know will naturally influence our decisions. That experience might help, or might not.*

Do you make decisions at tryouts, or notify players later?

We will begin to contact players as soon as possible *after* the tryout, and post final teams on-line.

What if a player is sick or injured and cannot try out for any other reason?

We will consider any player based on the information available to us. Some of our coaches may have had the opportunity to observe a player at a camp, a clinic, or playing on a school team. For a player who does not attend tryouts to be offered a position, it must be certain they merits it; close calls favor the player(s) who we can evaluate against their peers in the tryout setting. That said, if the information we have available to us tell us that a player definitely deserves a position, we would offer it to them.

If offered a position, when must a player decide?

When a player is offered a position, they can verbally accept the position. If a player is unsure at that time, how long we can wait is decided on a case-by-case basis. We will never require a decision in less than 24 hours. When the player who wants more time cannot be replaced by someone off the waiting list, a coach will generally wait, even if it means the position eventually is not filled. When a wait-listed player would be a reasonable replacement, we are not in a position to be as patient. Partly, the urgency is for benefit of the team, so the wait-listed player will still be available should a position open up. It is also in consideration of the wait-listed player, as they get the chance to play for their first choice before being forced to make a commitment elsewhere. **We will never make a take-it-or-leave it offer.**

What age group am I?

Usually, 18s are seniors in high school, 17s are juniors, etc. If you are too old for your peer group (e.g. an 8th grader whose birthday fits with the 15s), you must try out with your AGE group. If your birthday fits with the younger group (e.g. a 10th grader who can play 15s), we would prefer you attend with your PEER group, i.e. your classmates. In this case, we will consider you first with your peer group and secondly with you age group, looking for the best possible fit. We welcome parent and player input in this process.