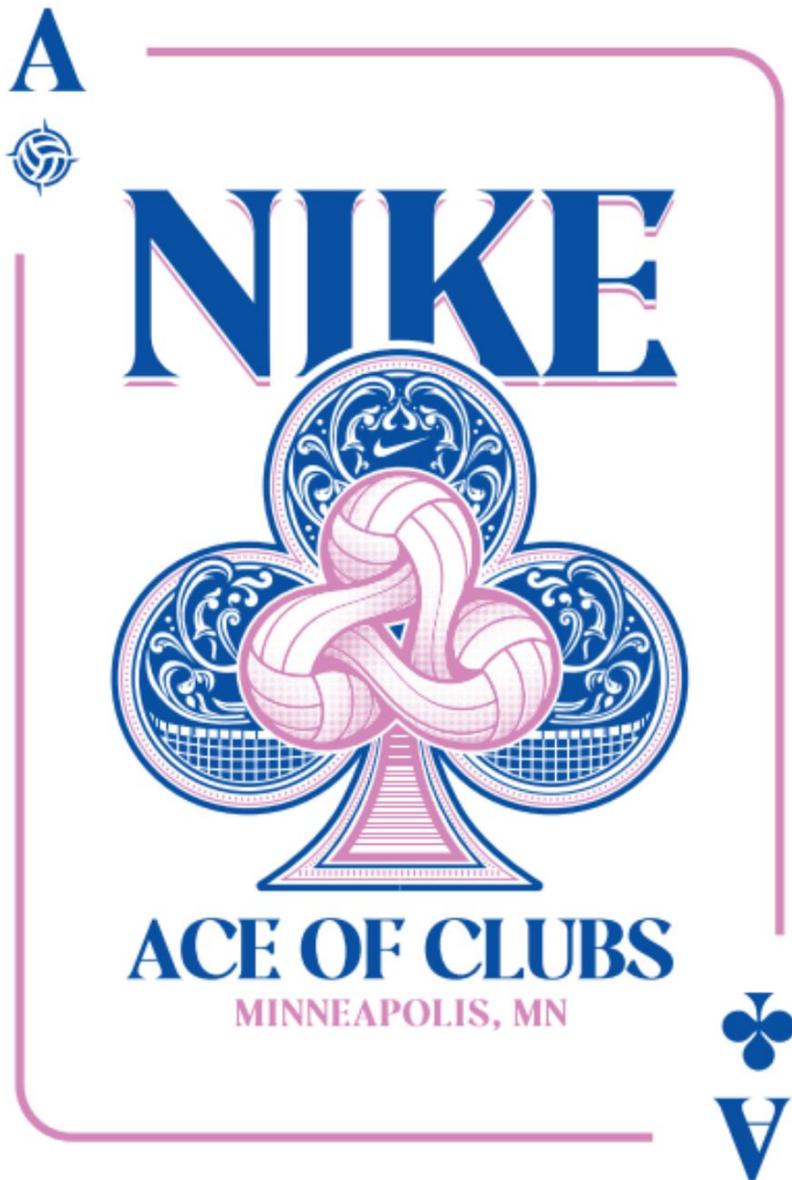


2026
NORTH COUNTRY REGION
QUALIFIER



CHAMPIONSHIP MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

USA VOLLEYBALL AND THE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

USA Volleyball (USAV), recognized by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee as the National Governing Body for volleyball, holds several national championships annually, including the USA Volleyball Girls 11-13s Junior National Championships (11-13s GJNC), Girls 14-17s Junior National Championships (14-17s GJNC), the 18s Girls Junior National Championships (18sGJNC) (collectively referred to as GJNCs), and NEW to 2026: the Girls Junior Club Championship (GJCC).

NEW for 2026: The GJCC provides competition for ages 10-17 in "Non- Bid" divisions. These divisions, formerly known as the Patriot divisions, previously competed at the GJNC but will now compete at the GJCC, with all ages playing in one facility at the same time.

The GJNCs provide competition by age classifications in various divisions of the Championships. Teams must qualify to play at the GJNCs for all Divisions (except 18 Patriot at the 18sGJNC) through one of two main paths; one is the NQ process and the other is the Region Bid process. A Team can earn a Bid to the GJNCs by finishing in a Bid award position at a NQ, through the At-Large Bid process, through a Region Bid process, or through the Region reallocation process.

PURPOSE OF NCR QUALIFIER CHAMPIONSHIP MANUAL

The primary purpose of NCRQ Championship Manual (NCRQCM) is to publish the standards established by NCR for the Region Qualifier/Bid Tournament. The secondary purpose is to explain the process of qualifying to play at USA Volleyball GJNCs.

The NCRQGM is intended to be a resource to NCR Teams attending the NCRQ.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

18s GJNC: An 18's National Championship that takes place in the spring with the 18 Open, 18 National, 18 USA, 18 Liberty 18 American, 18 Freedom and 18 Patriot Divisions.

American Division: The fifth-Tier division for 13's – 18's, and the second Tier for 11s & 12s of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

Bid: A Bid is an invitation to a Team to play in the GJNCs either through a NQ or a Region Bid process. To use the Bid, a Team must meet all entry deadlines and other requirements set by both their USAV Region and the USAV national office.

At-Large Bid: A GJNC Bid awarded in the Open or USA Division upon the completion of the Qualifier Season (both National and Regional) by the GJNC Seeding Committee based on performance during that season, in relation to other non-qualified Teams in that age group.

Reallocation Bid: A National, USA, American, or Freedom Division Bid to the GJNCs that is unused and is returned for reallocation to a Region. Reallocation is performed by the USAV Events Department.

Trickle-Down Bid: A GJNC Bid awarded at a NQ to a Team finishing lower than a usual Bid award position. This happens in some situations when a higher finishing Team has previously accepted a GJNC Bid from another NQ or a Region process or a Bid is declined from the National, Liberty, American, Freedom or USA Divisions. Note: 18 Open Bids may not be declined.

Club: An organization/group of one or more teams of different ages and abilities playing together under the same umbrella organization.

GCM: Girls Championship Manual

Event: Multiple Tournaments or activities associated within the same title, Sanction and host organization.

Freedom Division: The sixth-tier division for 14's – 18's of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

Frozen Player: A player who is restricted from participating on the roster of another Team. The specifics of the "Frozen Player" are numerous and can vary between the 18sGJNC and the GJNC. (Please see [Frozen Player Rule](#)).

GJNC: Girls Junior National Championship 11-13s, 14-17s and 18s

GJCC: Girls Junior Club Championship 10-17s

JA: Junior Assembly of USA Volleyball

Liberty Division: The fourth-tier division for 13's – 18's of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

Match: A head-to-head competition between two (2) Teams within a specified round of a Tournament. While typically two (2) sets out of three (3), some Matches may also involve an automatic three (3) sets

Qualifying Match: A Match that "qualifies" a Team for the GJNCs.

Seeding Match: A non-elimination Match meant to place or "seed" Teams into the next round of play.

National Division: The second-Tier division for 13's – 18's, and the top Tier for the 11s and 12s of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

NQ: National Qualifier Event

Open Division: The top Tier division for the 13's – 18's of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

Patriot Division: A non-qualifying division at the 18sGJNCs where Teams may gain access to the Tournament by simply entering the Event through the established process in the GCM. NEW to 2026: all other Patriot age divisions will now be played at the GJCC

Playing Surface: Area deemed as "playable" by the 2025-2027 USAV Indoor Rules Book for that court.

Region: One of 40 established member organizations of USAV governing a specific geographical area.

Round of play: A specified segment of a Tournament (typically a pool or playoff bracket). Tie breaker competition is NOT considered a round of play.

Sanction: Recognition and coverage of a given Event, and/or Tournament within an Event, by either a Region of USAV or the National Office.

Second Warm Up Period: Start of receiving Team's warm-up.

Seeding: The order in which teams are ranked to begin a Tournament.

Seeding Committee: A committee designated by NCR responsible for the tournament.

Team: A minimum of six (6) rostered players up to fifteen (15) players and no more than five (5) staff members, including the required head coach position.

Tie: When two (2) or more teams end pool play with identical Match records.

Tie Break: Method by which a Ties after pool play has concluded, are given a ranked order of finish to either advance to the next round of play or be placed into a competitive Tie breaking Match or series of Matches.

Tournament: Competition of a specific group of teams (i.e., Girls 16's Open Tournament) that could also be known as a "Championship."

QD: Qualifier Director

USA Division: The third-Tier division for 12s – 18's of the GJNCs where Teams must obtain a Bid to participate.

USAV: USA Volleyball

A NOTE FROM USA VOLLEYBALL & NORTH COUNTRY REGION

USA Volleyball's vision, and unwavering commitment, is "to build, create, and support a safe, inclusive, positive volleyball experience and a lifetime of opportunity for all."

HARASSMENT INCIDENT RESPONSE-OFFICIALS & STAFF (HIROS)

In addressing the increasing number of harassment incidents making headlines in sports, this serves as a reminder that there is ZERO TOLERANCE for harassment towards our officials, tournament staff, players, coaches, and spectators. To ensure accountability, the creation of the Harassment Incident Response – Officials & Staff (HIROS) is presented at NCRQ, National Qualifiers (NQ) and National Championships to encourage tournament staff to confidently respond in real-time to what is deemed as hate speech, inappropriate gestures, or aggressive physical interaction targeting an individual's ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and physical appearance. Those who witness on-site harassment must report these unacceptable behaviors and actions to our officials, event staff, or tournament staff. [HIROS FORM](#)

SPECTATOR CONDUCT

We also remind coaches of their crucial role in maintaining respectful and courteous behavior and their responsibility to guide their teams and spectators. Unsportsmanlike conduct by spectators will be addressed by Event Staff and may lead to dismissal from the event.

Let's all play our part in upholding the safety and integrity of the game and ensure a positive experience for all involved.

USA Volleyball Event Code of Conduct: [CLICK HERE](#)

USA VOLLEYBALL JUNIOR PLAYER AGE DEFINITION

For use during the 2025-2026 Season:

Once a player has:

1. Been enrolled at a university, college, community college, or junior college AND
2. Been cleared to participate by that (volleyball) program

The player is ineligible to take part in any regional and national programming, which includes but is not limited to national JNC qualifying and championship events.

To determine the correct age division, please find the Month of Birth in the left column and then the year of birth in the same row. The heading of the column matching the Year of Birth is the correct age bracket.

	18 & Under ¹	18 & Under ²	17 & Under	16 & Under	15 & Under	14 & Under	13 & Under	12 & Under	11 & Under	10 & Under	9 & Under	8 & Under
July	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Aug	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sept	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Oct	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Nov	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Dec	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Jan	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Feb	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Mar	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Apr	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
May	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
June	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

¹Players who were born on or after July 1, 2006 and a high school student in the twelfth (12th) grade or below during some part of the current academic year are eligible to compete in 18 & under.

^{2a}Players in this age range that have graduated high school are ineligible only if they have been enrolled at a university, college, community college or junior college AND have been cleared to participate by that (volleyball) program.

^{2b}Players who were born on or after July 1, 2007, (who are defined as 18 & under by the USAV Age Definition) and are in the 11th grade for the current academic year are eligible to compete in 17 & under.

Note: These age definitions are used by domestic club programs and are NOT the same as the age definitions for the International Competition and Domestic NDTP programs.

Please review our website for the full 2025-2026 Junior Age Definition: [CLICK HERE](#)

The Age Definition Policy was most recently revised by the USA Volleyball Board of Directors on May 27, 2025.

GJCC & GJNC AGES & DIVISION LEVELS

GJCC DIVISIONS OF PLAY

The goal of the GJCC is to allow opportunity for teams to compete in a Championship event without having to earn a bid.

*Please note: if a team accepts a bid, they will no longer be eligible to participate at the GJCC, and vice versa. If a team chooses to participate at the GJCC they will not be allowed to play at the GJNC. (Please review the Frozen Player rule for questions regarding individual players participating in both events)

AGE CLASSIFICATIONS & TEAM ENTRIES AT GJCC

	17 & Under	16 & Under	15 & Under	14 & Under	13 & Under	12 & Under	11 & Under	10 & Under
Club Division	64 Teams	64 Teams	64 Teams	48 Teams	48 Teams	24 Teams	24 Teams	24 Teams

*Overall team count and division sizes for the GJCC will be fluid and may change from the initial registration count. Due to changing circumstances, some divisions may increase and decrease as our team count fluctuates.

GJNC DIVISIONS OF PLAY

There are up to seven (7) major divisions of play at a given GJNC – Open, National, USA, Liberty, American, Freedom, and Patriot*. ***NEW for 2026:** Patriot Divisions for 10-17s will now have their own Championship and will no longer be played at the same venue as the GJNC.

The goal of the GJNCs **Open Divisions** is to identify, through competition, the best team in each GJNCs age group from among teams (see chart below) that have earned Bids. The NQ Open Divisions are designed to select those teams.

- To participate in an Open Division at the GJNCs, a team must earn a Bid from participating in an NQ Open Division – either winning the Bid outright at an NQ or being selected for an At-Large Bid after competing in an NQ Open Division (see [Open At-Large Bids](#)).

The goal of the GJNCs **National, USA, Liberty, American and Freedom** is to showcase Region Teams and provide the opportunity for more teams to participate at the GJNCs.

Teams have the following avenues to receive a Bid for a GJNCs Open, National, USA, Liberty, American or Freedom Division:

- Earn a Bid at a NQ (Open, National (11s – 12s only) USA, Liberty and American);

- Awarded an at-large Bid (Open, USA, and Liberty);
- Earn a Bid through their Region’s Bid process (National, American and Freedom); or
- Earn a Bid from their Region through the Re-allocation process (National, USA, Liberty, American and Freedom).

AGE CLASSIFICATION, DIVISIONS & TEAM ENTRIES AT GJNC

	18 & Under	17 & Under	16 & Under	15 & Under	14 & Under	13 & Under	12 & Under	11 & Under
Open Division	48 Teams	48 Teams	48 Teams	48 Teams	36 – 48* Teams	36 – 48* Teams		
National Division	48 Teams	48 Teams	48 Teams	24 Teams				
USA Division	48 Teams	48 Teams	32 Teams					
Liberty Division	48 Teams	48 Teams						
American Division	64 Teams	96 Teams	96 Teams	96 Teams	96 Teams	96 Teams	64 Teams	36 Teams
Freedom Division	48 Teams	64 Teams	64 Teams	64 Teams	64 Teams			
Patriot Division	24** Teams							

*13 & 14 Open – If all Qualifiers fill their 13 or 14 Open Divisions, 39 bids will be awarded and the GJNC will expand to 48 teams, with at-large bids added at the end of the Qualifying season. If the divisions do not fill and the number of awarded bids falls below 36, the GJNC will remain at 36 teams, with any remaining bids awarded through the at-large process at the end of the Qualifying season.

**18 Patriot will have a soft cap of the number listed above, but may accept additional Teams in a Tournament, in multiples of 4 Teams, dependent on available court space.

QUALIFICATION & BID PROCESS

NATIONAL QUALIFIER PROCESS

The primary purpose of the NQs is to select, through Tournament competition, Open, USA, Liberty, American and some National (11s and 12s) Teams in various age divisions to compete at the GJNCs. Teams may qualify for a Bid outside the NQ process for the National, USA, Liberty, American and Freedom Divisions.

The secondary purposes for the NQs are to:

- Promote inter-Regional play.
- Provide a high level of competition for Teams at different levels within each age division.
- Showcase junior talent for college recruiters and National Team Development programs.
- Promote the growth and development of volleyball in a particular geographic area.
- Provide a training ground for officials.

NQs are geographically assigned to cover a large portion of the United States to the extent that most Teams can attend at least one NQ within 8 hours drive. Currently, there are 13 NQs for 11s-14s, 15 American and 15 Liberty, and 14 NQs for 15 Open, USA & 16s- 17s: Big South (Atlanta)/ Music City Volleyball Championships (New Orleans), Salt Lake City Showdown (Salt Lake City), Sunshine Volleyball Classic (Orlando), Far Western (Reno), Mideast (St. Louis & Indianapolis), Lone Star (Houston/San Antonio/OK City/Farmers Branch), Northeast (Philadelphia & Washington DC), Northern Lights (Minneapolis), Pacific Northwest (Spokane), Show Me (Kansas City), Red Rock Rave (Las Vegas), Windy City (Chicago), Boston National Qualifier (Boston), and Girls West Coast* (Anaheim).

(*Girls West Coast Qualifier will only award 15 Open & USA, 16-17s bids for the 2026 season).

Currently there are 16 NQs for 18's: Girls Winter Volleyball Championships (Chicago), KC MLK 18's (Kansas City), Northern Lights 18's (Minneapolis), AVC Dallas (Dallas), Ohio Valley (Columbus), Music City Volleyball Championships (New Orleans), Florida Girls 18s National Qualifier (Orlando), Southeast (Atlanta), Boston National Qualifier (Boston), Sierra National Qualifier (Sacramento), Southern California 18's (Anaheim), Salt Lake City Showdown (Salt Lake), Lone Star (Austin), Pacific Northwest (Spokane), Mideast (Indianapolis), and Northeast (Philadelphia).

USAV'S ROLE IN NATIONAL QUALIFIERS

The NQs are Sanctioned by the USAV National Office which develops, standardizes, evaluates, and oversees the qualification process for the GJNCs through the USAV Events Department.

USAV and the Events Department monitor the qualifying process each season, and, with their various committees:

- Approve formats and flow charts for the NQ divisions
- Monitor the process by which Teams are accepted or denied entry into a NQ division
- Approve each NQ competition schedule grid
- Approve systems to seed the NQ Open Divisions
- Review and recommend improvements for NQ operations
- Establish and verify individual eligibility requirements for all participants in both Bid and non-Bid divisions

GJNC BIDS AWARDED THROUGH NORTH COUNTRY REGION:

NORTH COUNTRY REGION QUALIFIER AGE CLASSIFICATION & TEAM ENTRIES 2026.01.16

18 & Under	17 & Under	16 & Under	15 & Under	14 & Under	13 & Under	12 & Under	11 & Under
13	16	20	15	12	12	10	1

Regions are allocated Bids to three Divisions at the GJNCs – National, American and Freedom. Regions have the authority to establish their own process for awarding these Bids. **Bids awarded through a Region must be accepted in writing at, or prior to, the time of the Bid being awarded. TEAMS COMPETING IN THE NCRQ ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DECLINE A BID EARNED AT THE NCRQ. TEAMS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO ACCEPT AN NCRQ TRICKLEDOWN BID or A USAV REALLOCATED BID.**

NATIONAL DIVISION:

Each Region will receive at least one (1) National Bid to award at their discretion for the 13's – 18's. As there are a total of 48 Bids to be allocated to 40 Regions, the eight (8) largest Regions based on Girls Junior registrations from the previous season will be awarded a 2nd Bid to the National Divisions at the GJNCs.

For 12 's, the original allotment of Bids, and any reallocation Bids a Region receives, depends on the number of 12 and under Girls Junior registrations from the previous season, *not* on the total number of Girls Junior registrations in the Region. Given there are 40 USAV Regions and only 35 National Bids allocated to Regions not all will receive an allocated Bid. Regions not receiving an automatic Bid will be prioritized in the process of reallocating unused Bids.

NEW for 2026: Most 11 National bids will be awarded at NQ's. The final division size at GJNCs will be 24; therefore, the additional 11+ bids will be awarded to the Regions based on the largest number of 12 and under Girls Junior registrations from the previous season

NORTH COUNTRY REGION NATIONAL BIDS for 2026:

- 11s – 0
- 12s – 1
- 13s – 1
- 14s – 1
- 15s – 1
- 16s – 1
- 17s – 1
- 18s – 1

AMERICAN DIVISION:

Regions may receive up to three (3) American Bids to award at their discretion for the 11s – 18's. A certain amount will be awarded to NQs (as listed below), while the remaining American Bids will be allocated to the Regions.

NORTH COUNTRY REGION AMERICAN BIDS for 2026:

- 11s – 1
- 12s – 2
- 13s – 2
- 14s – 2
- 15s – 2
- 16s – 2
- 17s – 2
- 18s – 1

There is a total of 64 Bids to be allocated to 18s at GJNCs, with 16 of those bids going to the NQs.

There is a total of 96 Bids to be allocated to 13s – 17s at GJNCs, with either 26 or 28 of those bids going to NQs, depending on the age.

There is a total of 64 Bids to be allocated to the 12s at GJNCs with 13 of those bids going to NQs.

NEW for 2026: There are a total of 36 Bids to be allocated to 11 American, with all 36 going to the regions.

Bids allocated to Regions are determined through a junior girls membership benchmark that is defined in the Bid allocation chart posted on the USAV website.

The number of Bids received by a particular Region may change from year to year.

FREEDOM DIVISION:

NORTH COUNTRY REGION FREEDOM BIDS for 2026:

- 11s – NA
- 12s – NA
- 13s – NA
- 14s – 1
- 15s – 1
- 16s – 1
- 17s – 1
- 18s – 1

Each Region will receive at least one (1) Freedom Bid to award at their discretion for the 14's – 18's. As there are a total of 48 Bids in 18sGJNC and 64 in 14-17sGJNC to be allocated to 40 Regions, the eight (8) and twenty-four (24) Regions with the largest membership growth, based on Girls Junior registrations from the previous season, will be awarded a 2nd Bid to the Freedom Divisions at the GJNCs.

REALLOCATION BIDS

When a Bid is returned by a Region, the USAV Events Department distributes Reallocation Bids to the Regions in an order determined by the number of junior girls members (National Division), number of growth of junior girls members (Freedom Division) and the proximity of that number to certain benchmark membership numbers (American Division). **When a Team earns a higher-ranking Bid, the vacated Bid will stay with the Region** (see Rules for Priority of Bid Use).

***NEW for 2026:** With the addition of the second American bid in the 13-17 divisions, and the high team threshold needed to give out that second bid, some NQs might not meet that threshold. Should that be the case, the 2nd bid will be returned to USAV and will be awarded to the next region on the Reallocation list.

RULES FOR PRIORITY OF BID USE

Some Teams participate in more than one qualifying process in a season, either through their Region, by attending NQs, by applying for an At-Large Bid, or by some combination of these processes. If the Team earns more than one (1) Bid, the following rules apply as to which Bid the Team must use, and what happens to the other Bid(s).

The priority of Bid use is as follows:

1. Open
2. National
3. USA
4. Liberty
5. American
6. Freedom

PENALTIES

To ensure the integrity of GJNCs and to promote fair play, it may be necessary for USAV to impose penalties. USAV will convene an Event committee to review each case and impose a proper penalty(ies) if warranted.

FACTORS THAT WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR ESTABLISHING PENALTIES:

- Compliance with deadlines and requirements
- Time of notification from the start of GJNCs
- Previous club/member behavior
- Level of play (Open vs. American)
- Where Bid is earned and accepted (NQ vs. Regional)
- Severity of offense
- Age and Experience
- Region Input

PENALTIES FOR NOT USING A BID

It is disruptive to the quality of the Event when Bids are returned after being accepted. There are financial consequences, administrative challenges, and logistical delays for Teams, Region administrators and USAV personnel. Inevitably this takes opportunities away from other Teams participating in the qualification process.

A Team that does not use a GJNCs Open Bid (13's-18's) which it has earned, or a GJNCs National, USA, Liberty, American, or Freedom Bid which it has earned and accepted may be subject to the following penalties:

FINANCIAL PENALTIES

- 2 months prior to the start of GJNCs– payment of entry fee and \$1,000 fine. Penalties may vary at the discretion of USA Volleyball.
- If the payment is not received for the GJNCs Event Entry Fee and/or fines, the club director(s), coaches affiliated with official qualification roster will be prohibited from participating in NQs and GJNCs until the fee is paid in full. Further legal actions may be taken to ensure payment is received.

SUSPENSION OF PARTICIPATION:

- Club Director suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Head Coach listed on the official qualification roster suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- All members listed on the official qualification roster suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Specific age group from club suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.

- Club or specific team suspended from participation in all NQ and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- All suspensions will be published and updated on the USAV website.

ADDITIONAL PENALTIES:

- USAV reserves the right to impose additional penalties as deemed necessary.
- Regions reserve the right to impose additional penalties to Teams within their Region.

PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL USE OF BID

If a Team is deemed ineligible or have ineligible participants (age falsification, frozen player, foreign participation, ethics/eligibility, gender competition policy, SafeSport violations etc.) the following penalties may be applied:

FINANCIAL PENALTIES:

- Loss of entry fee and a \$2,500 fine.
- If the payment is not received for the GJNCs Event entry fee and/or fines, the club director(s), coaches affiliated with official qualification roster will be prohibited from participating in NQs and GJNCs until the fee is paid in full. Further legal actions may be taken to ensure payment is received.

SUSPENSION OF PLAY:

- Club Director suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Head Coach listed on the official qualification roster suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- All members listed on the official qualification roster suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Specific age group from club suspended from participation in all NQs and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Club or specific team suspended from participation in all NQ and/or Regional Qualification Events and GJNCs for the remainder of the season and the following season.
- Suspended membership or probation.
- All suspensions will be published and updated on the USAV website.

ADDITIONAL PENALTIES:

- Revocation of bids, past awards, winnings and titles.
- USAV reserves the right to impose additional penalties as deemed necessary (see [USA Volleyball Age and Identity Falsification Policy](#))

Regions reserve the right to impose additional penalties to Teams within their Region.

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

APPEALS

When a penalty(ies) is imposed on a club/Team/individual by USAV, they may file for an appeal. Appeals may be filed with the USAV Ethics and Eligibility Committee by sending all relevant documentation to the USAV Staff Attorney by deadlines outlined in the initial Sanction letter. All appeals shall be accompanied by a non-refundable \$100 fee made payable to USA Volleyball.

RULES OF PLAY

The rules of play are as prescribed in the USA Volleyball Rules Book. Below are recent rules changes and points of emphasis for the 2025-2026 season:

SIGNIFICANT RULE CHANGES

- **9.2.3.2:** At the first hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action. At the second hit of the team, the ball may contact various parts of the body consecutively, provided that the contacts occur during one action, and the ball is next touched by a teammate.
- **9.3:** Faults in Playing the Ball **DOUBLE CONTACT:** a player hits the ball twice in succession or the ball contacts various parts of his/her body in succession on the third team hit or on the second team hit and the ball is not next touched by a teammate. (see also 9.2.3)
- **New 12.5.3:** Any player of the serving team is forbidden to raise their hands above the head during service, until the ball has passed beyond the net. The 1st referee may warn a team through the game captain, if he/ she suspects that the team is deliberately screening.
- **USAV 15.1:** Each team may request a maximum of two time-outs and 15 substitutions per set.
- **USAV 15.6a:** Fifteen substitutions are the maximum permitted per team per set. Substitution of one or more players is permitted at the same time.
- **USAV 15.6d:** Unlimited individual entries by a substitute within the team's allowable 15 substitutions are permitted.
- **USAV 19.1.1:** Each team has the right to designate from the list of players on the score sheet (roster) up to two specialized defensive players called Liberos.
- **USAV 24.2.7a:** The R2 controls the number of time-outs and substitutions used by each team and reports the second time-out and substitutions 12, 13, 14, and 15 to the appropriate coach or game captain. (see also 15.1, 25.2.2.3)
- **USAV 24.2.7b:** The R2 notifies the 1st referee of a team's second time-out and 15th substitution.
- **New USAV 20.3:** Filming and Recording of Matches
(NOTE: This ruling is under review and could be subject to revision)
20.3.1 Athletes, Coaches, and team members on the bench are permitted to record audio and video for team use. However, these recordings must not be used to intimidate, demoralize, or bully other teams, officials, the work team, support staff, or spectators. Additionally, teams may not record a conversation with a referee or the work team. If a team is found to have recorded these groups and used the audio or video to engage in such behavior, USA Volleyball will enforce regional and national policies accordingly, and content will be evaluated through the Code of Conduct lens and other protection-focused programs such as HIROS

20.3.2 Players on the court are not permitted to wear microphones. If the referee(s) discovers a player on the court wearing a microphone, the match is stopped, and the player is asked to remove the microphone. The off-ending team issued a delay warning due to unauthorized equipment.

20.3.3 Teams may not post any audio and/or video in a public forum (including social media accounts) with the intent of making fun of, criticizing, or mocking the officials, the work team, the opponent, or the tournament. Discovery of such audio and/or video will result in penalties as determined by USA Volleyball.

SIGNIFICANT RULE CLARIFICATIONS

- **USAV 5.1.2.1:** Judgment decisions are not subject to protest. A protest related to a judgment decision may result in a penalty (red card) being assessed to the coach.
- **USAV 12.4.4 and USAV 12.4.4a:** For 14-and-under age groups, the server must hit the ball within 8 seconds after the 1st referee whistles for service. If the server tosses the ball and then catches it or allows it to fall to the floor, this is considered a service tossing error, including a ball that touches the server as it falls.

ARTIFICIAL NOISE MAKERS AND PORTABLE MUSIC DEVICES

Due to their disruptive nature, artificial noise makers are prohibited at NQs and GJNCs. In addition, teams may not use portable music devices courtside, including during warmups.

TOURNAMENT FORMATS

The Tournament format determines the number of pools in a division, the number of Teams in each pool and the sequence of play, from pool play through playoffs. A Tournament “flow chart” illustrates the sequence of the format components. Approved Tournament “flow charts” are posted on the USAV website.

MATCH FORMATS

The preferred Match format is pools of four (4) playing the best 2-out-of-3 sets.

- The first two (2) sets play to 25 points, rally scoring, with one (1) Team winning by two (2) points and no point cap.
- If a 3rd (deciding) set is necessary, it is played to 15, rally scoring, with one (1) Team winning by two (2) points and no point cap.

Some pools of three (3) may play all three (3) sets to 25, regardless of whether a Team wins the first two (2). This exception depends on the number of pools of three (3) in a division.

- In a three (3)-Team pool, where three (3) sets to 25 are played instead of 2 out of 3, and the final finish in the pool is determined by Match record. Should one (1) Team win the first two (2) sets of the Match, that Team has won the Match, but Teams will still play the 3rd set. Should there be a 3-way Tie in the pool with all three (3) Teams having a 1-1 Match record, ALL sets played will be used when determining set percentage when going to a Tie-breaker. When playing the 3rd set, there will be a coin flip between sets two (2) and three (3) to determine serve and receive.
- For division sizes of 8-16 Teams, pools comprised of more than 5 Teams may be utilized.

SEEDING OF DIVISIONS

Seeding for the NCRQ is determined by Team results throughout the year as collected by USA Volleyball, online junior volleyball score/results reporting, and when needed past season final results at NQs or JNCs as entered into the official registration system using Team codes. For accuracy team codes should stay the same from season to season.

POOL PLAY SEQUENCE

Pool play sequences, listed below, are allowable for use with all respective pools. NCR intends to maintain the sequence of matches; however, the schedule may be altered to include an additional break in play based on the needs of the tournament.

Round	Four-Team Pools	Three-Team Pools	Five-Team Pools when on 2 Courts
Match 1	1 vs. 3 (ref 2)	1 vs. 3 (ref 2)	1 vs. 5 and 2 vs. 4 (ref 3)
Match 2	2 vs. 4 (ref 1)	2 vs. 3 (ref 1)	1 vs. 4 and 2 vs. 3 (ref 5)
Match 3	1 vs. 4 (ref 3)	1 vs. 2 (ref 3)	1 Hour Break if possible
Match 4	2 vs. 3 (ref 1)	May have crossover if division has more than one three-team pool and playing best 2 out of 3	1 vs. 3 and 4 vs. 5 (ref 2)
Match 5	3 vs. 4 (ref 2)		2 vs. 5 and 3 vs. 4 (ref 1)
Match 6	1 vs. 2 (ref 4)		1 vs. 2 and 3 vs. 5 (ref 4)

Round	Four-Team Pools Court 1	Four-Team Pools Court 2
Match 1	A 1 vs. 3 (ref B3)	A 2 vs. 4 (ref B2)
Match 2	B 1 vs. 3 (ref A3)	B 2 vs. 4 (ref A4)
Match 3	A 2 vs. 3 (ref B3)	A 1 vs. 4 (ref B4)
Match 4	B 2 vs. 3 (ref A2)	B 1 vs. 4 (ref A4)
Match 5	A 1 vs. 2 (ref B4)	A 3 vs. 4 (ref B1)
Match 6	B 3 vs. 4 (ref A1)	B 1 vs. 2 (ref A3)

A Team's final pool finish is determined by Match results. If Team(s) are tied in matches at the completion of pool play, Tie breaker procedures will apply (see Tie Breakers to Determine Pool Finish).

PLAYING SCHEDULES

- All pool play will occur on Day one (1).
- The first Match of a pool in morning wave will begin at its scheduled time. All matches may start as soon as all participants are ready to begin. This includes the two playing teams, the work team, and the assigned USAV officials. If any participant is not ready or does not agree to start early, then the match will not begin until its scheduled start time or until the court becomes available. This must also consider that the appropriate warm-up time is applied before the match may begin.
- All Teams will be guaranteed two matches on the final day of competition.

COURT USE

- Gold Bracket will have matches to determine 1st – 6th place teams.
- Saturday pool play may start at 7:30 AM.
- Sunday matches may start as early as 7:30 AM, based on the needs of the tournament/
- Final Matches of the day are scheduled to begin no later than 9:00 p.m.

WARM-UP PROTOCOL

For Junior competition, when one (1) Team has exclusive use of the court, the other Team must either be at its Team bench or out of the playing area. Warming up with balls at the Team bench or in the spectator walkways is not permitted.

Primary Warm-up Protocol – (5-4-4): – For all Teams in their first Match of a round of play.

- Five (5) minutes of shared court time for ball handling; and
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for the serving Team;
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for the receiving Team.
- There will be no shared hitting time.

Secondary Warm-Up Protocol (2-4-4): For all other Matches within the round of play.

- Two (2) minutes of shared court time for ball handling; and
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for the serving Team; and
- Four (4) minutes of exclusive court time for the receiving Team.
- There will be no shared hitting time.

A crossover Match or Tie-breaking Match that immediately follows pool play is part of that previous single round of play; Teams follow the Secondary Warm-Up Protocol set out below.

A crossover Match, Seeding Match or qualifying Match that occurs after a scheduled break, after the conclusion of pool play, is a separate round of play; Teams in this round follow the Primary Warm-Up Protocol. If all parties agree, the warm-up time may be shortened.

TIE BREAKERS TO DETERMINE POOL FINISH

At the conclusion of a pool, the pool finish position of the Teams is determined by their pool match records. If there is a tie in match record among 2 or more Teams in the pool, tie(s) are resolved using the Tie Break Rules, even in 3 team pools where all 3 sets are required to be played.

TIE BREAKER RULES

Ties in Matches are broken by the following steps:

TWO TEAMS TIE IN MATCHES

Always broken head-to-head. No exceptions.

THREE-OR-MORE TEAMS TIE IN MATCHES

1. Head-to-head results are used to determine pool finishes for Teams that are tied in Match Record.
 - a) A Team that beats all the other Teams with which it is tied in Match Record will finish ahead of the other Teams in the pool.
 - b) A Team that has lost to all the other Teams with which it is tied in Match Record is placed behind the other Teams in pool finish.
 - c) If there are only two Teams tied in matches after steps 1(a) and 1(b) have been applied, the head-to-head winner of those 2 Teams earns the higher pool finish.
 - d) If after applying steps 1(a), 1(b) & 1(c), Teams remain tied, then the ranking of those remaining Teams follows the procedure in step 2.
2. Set percentage is the 2nd level of breaking ties and is used to rank a pool in which Teams remain tied after applying the rules in step 1.
 - a) Teams with a higher set percentage finish ahead of Teams with a lower set percentage.
 - b) If only two Teams are tied in both match percentage and set percentage, the Team that won head-to-head receives the higher finish in the pool.
 - c) If three Teams (or more) are tied in match percentage and set percentage after applying steps 2(a) & 2(b), the tie breaking procedure followed is based on whether a Team is eliminated from advancing to the Gold at BJNC/GJNCs or earning the Qualifier Bid to BJNC/GJNCs using Steps 2(d) and 2(e).
 - d) **If no Team is eliminated from advancing to earn a Bid to GJNCs**, pool finish among the Teams tied in Match percentage and Set percentage is determined by Point percentage. If two Teams are still tied in point percentage, the head-to-head winner finishes higher.
 - e) **If a Team would be eliminated from advancing to earning a Bid to BJNC/GJNCs**, the remaining Teams that are tied in match percentage and set percentage have Playoff Tie Breaker Set(s) played as defined in step 3.
3. Playoff Tie Breaker Sets are played if 3 or more Teams remain tied after applying steps 1 & 2. Girls National Qualifiers/Boys National Qualifiers and the BJNC/GJNCs have different protocols and are defined below.

NORTH COUNTRY REGION QUALIFIER:

To determine pool finish position, tied Teams are ranked by their point percentage from the pool. If 3 or more tied teams are tied in point percentage, they will be ranked for a playoff based on their initial ranking in the pool. Tie Breaker Sets, if required, are played as 1 set to 15. There may be brackets of 2, 3, or 4 Teams. Tie Breaker sets are only played for the last spot leading to a Qualifier Bid.

- a) If there is 1 pool position available for a Team to advance to play for a bid position, all Teams participate in the Tie Breaker Sets. The sequence of play offsets is structured so that the Teams with the highest point percentages have the fewest number of Tie Breaker Sets to play.
- b) If there are two pool positions available for a Team to advance to play for a bid position, the Team with the highest point percentage is ranked the highest and receives one of the advancing positions. Remaining Teams participate in the Tie Breaker Sets. The sequence of playoff sets is structured so that the Teams with the highest point percentages have the fewest number of Tie Breaker Sets to play.
- c) If there are three pool positions available for a Team to advance to play for a bid, the two Teams with the highest point percentages each receive one of the advancing spots. The remaining Teams participate in the Tie Breaker Sets. The sequence of play offset is structured so that the Teams with the highest point percentages have the fewest number of Tie Breaker Sets to play.

Following the rules set out above, it is possible for one or more tied Teams to advance without having to play in a Tie Breaker Set, as only the last pool position is played off. It is possible that Teams will be eliminated from the GOLD bracket in a National Qualifier as the Tie Breaker is played to determine the chance to play for a Qualifier Bid, NOT for the Gold Bracket.

TEAMS NOT PRESENT FOR TIE BREAKER

If one or more of the tied Teams are not present at the court at the beginning of the timed warm-ups for a tiebreaker match (including the officiating team, which may only have officiating responsibilities), the following scenarios should be followed:

- If one of the tied teams is not present, the missing team will be eliminated from the tiebreaker and assigned the lowest position available within the tie. This is the only penalty that will be enforced on this team.
- If two of the tied teams are not present, the missing teams will be eliminated from the tiebreaker and the one team present will be awarded the highest position available. The other two teams will be placed based on head-to-head results in the pool.
- If all three of the tied teams are not present, the teams will be placed based on point percentage. If teams are tied in point percentage, they will be placed in the pool based on their initial seed.

TEAM AND PLAYER POLICIES

TEAM UNIFORMS

Team players are required to wear uniforms that are in full compliance with the USAV regulations. If two (2) or more sets of uniforms are used, players are required to wear the identical number for each set of shirts.

- The numbers “0” and “00” are not permitted.
- The numbers must be centered.
- Front numbers must be a minimum of 4” and back numbers a minimum of 6”
- All Libero shirts are required to be numbered and must be contrasting with the non-libero uniform shirts.

Team members need to be in proper uniform when warming up. If an individual competes in a position other than Libero as well, his/her number must be the same as their regular uniform.

PLAYING UP

A Team should play in the division that conforms to the USAV age requirements for the Team’s players. The Team’s 11 digit code stipulates its proper age division.

TEAM FORFEITURES

A Team that intentionally forfeits a Match at an Event will be excluded from further participation in the NCRQ.

- The forfeit is intentional unless the Team shows good cause for the forfeit, such as illness and emergency circumstances.
 - The Event Tournament Director will determine if good cause exists.
- Forfeiting Teams will be subject to a \$450.00 fine paid to the Event and removed from competition for the remainder of the event.
- If a Team intentionally forfeits a Match in Bid contention, in any division, the Team’s penalty will be:
 - ALL Adult Members listed on the verified Event competition roster and the Club Director will be suspended from participating in all Regional Qualification Events and for the remainder of that season and the following season.

LAST DAY FORFEITS

Teams that enter compete in the NCRQ are committing to participating in the full Event.

A Team that forfeits a Match for any reason other than illness, injury or emergency is denying another Team a Match and denying Region Officials work opportunities. Additionally, in a single elimination format, it is poor sportsmanship to deny a Team the right to move on by beating them and then forfeiting out of the Event. Furthermore, it is even more unacceptable to forfeit and then, as the loser of the Match, not stay to officiate the next Match.

TEAM OFFICIATING DUTIES

The NCRQ publishes an officiating assignment schedule for the Teams; **the Teams must fulfill all their scheduled officiating assignments.**

Teams are responsible for providing an officiating/work crew for Matches in which they are not scheduled to play. It is expected that the Officiating Team will report to their assignment in a timely manner that allows the match to commence without delays. Those work assignments can be found in the official play schedule. For planning purposes, be prepared to provide the following officials:

- Second Referee
 - Must be a rostered adult (non-players) for **ALL** age division Matches (with approval from the tournament staff, a rostered adult from another team within the same club may work as second referee)
- Certified Scorer (PENALTIES NOTED BELOW)
- Scoreboard Operator
- Libero Tracker
- 2 Line Judges

Non-rostered personnel may be allowed to work on the officiating Team, with the exception of the R2 position, provided they can provide documentation that they are registered with a Region of USAV to include a current membership, cleared background screening, completed SafeSport training, as well as have the appropriate certifications.

MISSED OFFICIATING DUTIES

A Team's failure to have a complete officiating crew—including a rostered adult from the same Club—available and on time for an officiating assignment will result in penalties against the Team.

- For every minute an officiating Team is late to fulfill its assignment, one (1) point will be awarded to that Team's next opponent in the first set of the next Match for up to 25 points. No more than 25 points will be awarded to the Team's next opponent, even if the Team designated to officiate misses the entire Match. The time that determines how many penalty points are assessed begins at the start of the official timed warm-up.
- A Team will forfeit its entire next Match for failing, a second time, to have an officiating crew available on time for an officiating assignment.

AGE WAIVERED PLAYERS

Teams competing in the NCRQ Bid Division may NOT use any player who has received an age waiver.

TEAM ROSTERS

A Team must have a minimum of one (1) head coach and six (6) players. A Team may have a maximum of fifteen (15) players and five (5) additional personnel on their roster, one of which must be listed as the Head Coach. The other four (4) roster positions may be any combination of the following:

1. Assistant Coach
2. 2nd Assistant Coach
3. 3rd Assistant Coach
4. Chaperone
5. Team Representative
6. Team Manager

ROSTERED ATHLETE REQUIREMENTS

All rostered players must be FULL MEMBERS of North Country Region USA Volleyball.

Athletes turning 18 during the season will be required to take "Core" Center for SafeSport training upon turning 18. To prevent any disruption in play, the center will allow athletes who are 17, turning 18 during the season to take "Core" given parental consent. Once a player turns 18, he or she will not be permitted to continue play until "Core" SafeSport training has been completed.

PLAYER'S NUMBER ON OFFICIAL ROSTER:

For all Events, each player is required to wear the same jersey number as listed on the official roster throughout the entire Event, with limited exceptions as required by emergency or blood rule applications.

If a player is found playing in the wrong numbered jersey, the Tournament Director and selected NCRQ staff, will determine the penalty(ies) to be imposed. Additional penalties may be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Penalties for an **incorrect number** are listed below:

- If the error is discovered **prior or after** the team's match, the roster may be adjusted, and the player may play once the corrected roster is presented to the referees.
 - NOTE: After the **first day of play**, jersey number updates are subject to a roster change fee of up to \$50 per change. The fee must be paid to the tournament desk before the roster is updated. *Such changes should be limited to urgent or unavoidable circumstances.*
- If the error is discovered **during** the match, the player may not compete for the remainder of the match and the roster may not be adjusted until the conclusion of the match.
 - If the player is on the court at the time of the discovery, USAV 7.3.5.3 as listed in the *2025-2027 Indoor Rules Book* is applied:
 - If the Team at fault is currently serving, all points scored during that term of service are removed, and the lineup is corrected.
 - If the opponent is serving, the lineup is corrected, and no additional penalty or sanction

is assessed.

No penalty is assessed on previous rounds or matches where the player may have played in the wrong numbered jersey.

PLAYER MISSING FROM OFFICIAL ROSTER:

For all Events, each player is required to be listed on the official roster throughout the entire event. **If a player is found participating and is not on the official roster**, the following penalties will be imposed:

- If the missing player is discovered **prior** to the team's first match of the tournament, the player may be added to the roster and may play once the \$50 roster change fee is paid to the tournament desk, and the corrected roster is presented to the referees.
- If the missing player is discovered **during** the match, the following will occur:
 - Player may not compete for the remainder of the match and Rule 7.3.5.4 as listed in the *2025-2027 Indoor Rules Book* is applied: Where a player is found to be on court but he/she is not registered on the team roster, the opponent's points remain valid, and in addition they gain a point and service. The team at fault will lose all points and/or sets (0:25, if necessary) gained from the moment the non-registered player entered the court, and will have to submit a revised line-up sheet and send a new registered player into the court, in the position of the non-registered player.
 - The team may add the player to the roster after the conclusion of the match, but before the next match, but only after paying a \$50 roster change fee to be paid to the tournament desk.
 - Note: the player must be an eligible member within the Club and available to be added to the roster. Please reference the USA Volleyball Age and Identity Falsification Policy for further review.
- If the missing player is discovered after the **completion** of the match, the following will occur:
 - The team will forfeit the most recent match within the round where the illegal player was found to have played.
 - The player may only be added to the roster after confirming the player is eligible, and the team pays a \$50 roster change fee to be paid to the tournament desk.
 - Note: the player must be an eligible member within the Club and available to be added to the roster. Please reference the USA Volleyball Age and Identity Falsification Policy for further review.

ROSTERED STAFF REQUIREMENTS

All rostered personnel (non-players) must:

- Be FULL MEMBERS of North Country Region USA Volleyball
- Be SafeSport trained, and
- Have a current, cleared background screening if applicable.

Junior level members under the age of 18 do not need to be background screened and can only serve as a Team Manager on the roster.

Junior members 18 years old and above, serving in non-player capacity on a junior Team, must have submitted and cleared a background screening within 30 days of their 18th Birthday and must be SafeSport trained.

In order to be listed as a coach, serve in a coaching capacity, one must possess a minimum coaching certification level of IMPACT (Entry Level).

An IMPACT certified person, listed on the roster, must be present and on the bench at all times. It is strongly recommended that Teams have more than one IMPACT certified person on their roster. In the event an IMPACT certified person is not present (late, sick, ejected or disqualified), the Team must have another IMPACT certified person on their roster and on the Team bench for play to begin or continue without forfeit. No additional time will be allowed to comply with the IMPACT certified person requirement to continue play except for unused time outs and/or time allowed between sets.

The Head Coach listed on the Official competition roster must have no other head coach designation with any other Team concurrently within the same Event.

IMPACT certification rating may be met by successfully completing one of the following programs:

- USA Coaching Accreditation Program (CAP), Levels I, II or III
- RVA IMPACT course (Region or National Office verification required)
- Canadian Volleyball Associations Levels 1-4
- FIVB International Courses Levels 1-3
- ACEP “Principles of Coaching” course with proof of purchase of the USAV IMPACT Manual
- USA Volleyball IMPACT In Person
- USA Volleyball IMPACT On Demand
- USA Volleyball CAP or BCAP I, II, or III
- NFHS Fundamentals of Volleyball
- NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching
- ASEP Coaching Principles
- NCCP Level 1 Community Coach Workshop (minimum)
- FIVB Level 1 Course (minimum)
- University of college approved “Introduction to Coaching” course

The **Team Manager** position is primarily reserved for, but not restricted to, junior level members (members who are registered in a junior level membership category or are under the age of 18) participating with a junior Team in a non-player capacity. These members cannot be placed in any Team staff position other than “Team Manager”. Junior level staff members must be at least 10 years of age. North Country Region reserve the right to conduct random ID checks on any staff person listed on the roster at any time.

Individual participation eligibility requirements (membership, background screening, IMPACT, minimum age, SafeSport trained etc.) are subject to verification by USAV, including use of random ID checks by the Event Staff and/or the NQ or GJNCs designee.

STAFF MISSING FROM OFFICIAL ROSTER:

For all Events, each Rostered Staff is required to be listed on the official roster throughout the entire event. **If a Rostered Staff is found on the bench and is not on the official roster**, the following penalties will be imposed:

- If a person that is not listed on the official roster for a team and is found present on the team’s bench **prior to the match**, the roster may be adjusted, but only after the Rostered Staff has been confirmed as eligible, any roster change fees has been paid to the tournament desk*, and the corrected roster is presented to the referees.
- If a person that is not listed on the official roster for a team and is found present on a team’s bench **during a match**, a roster violation has occurred, and the individual is deemed an Illegal participant for that team. The following penalties will be enforced:

- The Illegal Participant will be asked to leave the bench for the remainder of the match, and a delay warning will be imposed on the team.
- If the same individual is caught a second time and verified during the match, they will be removed from the event and the team will forfeit the current set.

*The addition of staff to an official roster once play has started will result in a \$50.00 fine.

USA VOLLEYBALL AGE AND IDENTITY FALSIFICATION POLICY

Any member in question must provide proof of identity and age eligibility if requested by an Event staff member.

The following constitutes as proof of identity and age:

- Current Driver's License or Identification Card
- Birth Certificate – Junior Members Only
- Military Identification Card
- Current Passport

For all NCR USAV Sanctioned Events, any person who alters a document that certifies the age or identity of a participant, or falsifies any statement that lists the age or identity of a participant, will be penalized as follows:

- A junior player who knowingly plays in a lower age classification than he or she is actually eligible for, or an adult player who knowingly plays in a higher age classification than he or she is actually eligible for, or any player who knowingly misrepresents his or her identity shall be:
 - Immediately suspended from registration with NCR USAV and barred from further participation in the Event; and barred from participation in any NCR USAV Events, in any capacity, for a minimum of two (2) years; and
 - Placed on a minimum probation of one (1) additional year, to run consecutively with the suspension.
- Any Team Representative, Coach, Club Director or responsible adult found to be a party to such action shall be subject to the same penalties.

When age or identity falsification is discovered and confirmed during an Event, these penalties shall be the required minimum penalty imposed by the Event Director. An additional \$450.00 fine will be imposed to include forfeitures.

The Event Staff shall file a report detailing the incident of any age or identity violation, to USA Volleyball.

GENDER COMPETITION POLICY

For more information please refer to the USAV website at: <https://usavolleyball.org/about/gender-guidelines/>

ROSTER VERIFICATION AND TEAM CHECK IN

All teams will submit rosters online via AES by end-of-day **February 2, 2026**.

All teams will send a team/club appointed representative for in person team check **4-9 pm, February 6, at Minneapolis Convention Center Hall C**. Details about online and in person team check are available on NCR's website for the [NIKE Ace of Clubs Region Qualifier pages](#).

No additions or changes for players or staff on a Team's roster are allowed once a Team has begun match play in the event, except as specifically stipulated elsewhere in this document or outlined in the USAV Rules Book. The person who signs the Official Roster, whether the Coach, Club Director or other designated adult (Signing Agent), assumes all responsibility for verifying that:

All of the information contained on the Official Roster is both complete and correct, including that:

- All rostered positions adhere to the requirements listed under TEAM ROSTERS (Please see [Team Rosters](#)) OR have fully completed the necessary process established for Foreign Teams (Please see [Policy on Foreign Individual and Foreign Team Participation](#)).
- All reported Team competition results are complete and accurate.

If a Team wins a Bid, the players on the Official Roster, as signed by the Signing Agent, are frozen to that Team.

NCRQ will send the Official Rosters of the Bid winners, Bid acceptance forms and official results for each division of the NCRQ to the USAV Events Department at the conclusion of the Event (no later than two days post Event). The Events Department will post the qualified Team rosters and results on the USAV website.

(See [Frozen Player Rule](#) below for additional information about Region Bids and At-Large Bids in regards to Official Rosters.)

SAFESPORT

Participation in nationally sanctioned events will require that SafeSport training be completed by all registered adults and all players who are 18 years or older during the event (note, foreign teams are exempt, but we strongly recommend you take the course). Individual regions may set earlier deadlines for their respective regional events. The Safe Sport Training requirement is associated with each member's USA Volleyball membership. If there are questions or issues completing Safe Sport training, please email:

membership@ncrusav.org

Adults who have frequent contact with or authority over Minor Athletes must read over and adhere to the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, otherwise known as the MAAPP. A shortened version of the MAAPP can be found here: [2025 SafeSport MAAPP Policy](#)

All adult participants of USA Volleyball are mandatory reporters of abuse.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport has exclusive jurisdiction over allegations of Sexual Misconduct. To report sexual misconduct, please click on the following link to report directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport: [Report a Concern | U.S. Center for SafeSport \(uscenterforsafesport.org\)](#)

To report any other form of Misconduct, including Physical and Emotional misconduct (such as bullying, hazing, harassment), retaliation, violations of the MAAPP, or any other violations of the SafeSport Code, you may file a concern with USA Volleyball at the following link: [USAV Incident Reporting Form \(formsite.com\)](#)

In addition, the U.S. Center for SafeSport offers SafeSport training for parents and minor athletes free of charge. These courses can be taken at the following link: [U.S. Center for SafeSport \(safesporttrained.org\)](#)

THE “FROZEN PLAYER” RULE

Once a female junior player has participated in a bid division at a GJNCs qualifying Event (National Qualifier or Regional Qualifier), she may not be on the Official Roster of, or compete in, another GJNCs qualifying or Championship Event with a different Club.

Example: A player plays on a Team at a National Qualifier in a qualifying division. The team does not qualify at that event. The player is frozen to the club at that point, and may not transfer to a different club that is planning to play at another qualifier or National Championship (including the Club National Championship)

Earning and accepting an Open, National, USA, Liberty, American or Freedom Bid defines the Team as “Qualified” for the GJNCs. Once a Team is deemed Qualified, the players listed on the Qualified Team’s Official Roster are deemed “Frozen Players” to that roster.

The players on the Team’s Qualified Official Roster are subject to the following restrictions:

- A Frozen Player cannot be on the roster of - or play with - another Team in a Regional Qualifier or NQ Event. They cannot be on roster of a different Team applying for an Open At-Large Bid, or another Team playing at the GJNCs*.

A player may not help multiple Teams qualify for GJNCs.

TOURNAMENT REQUIREMENTS

OFFICIALS

All pool play and playoff bracket Matches must have a USAV-certified official as the 1st referee.

It is recommended to provide second referees as available.

NOTE: It is highly recommended that there be 1st and 2nd referee for gold level (3rd pool) Matches, semifinal and final Matches in the Open division, as well as quarterfinals, semifinals and finals in National, USA, Liberty, and American Divisions.

AWARDS

It is the obligation of the head coach to be aware of his/her individual State High School Association rules regarding the acceptance of awards. If necessary, present the properly signed papers as required by your State High School Activities Association.

NCRQ will provide the following medals and respective banner for overall finish:

- First Place – National Bid – Gold Medal
- Second Place – American Bid – Silver Medal
- Third Place – American Bid or Freedom Bid – Bronze Medal
- Fourth Place – Freedom Bid

PROTEST COMMITTEE

Each Event must have an on-site Protest Committee consisting of one (1) to three (3) members, one of which will be a Head Official or Head Scorer depending on the nature of the protest. Other members may consist of the Tournament director or his/her designee, and another qualified person to rule on protests lodged by Teams regarding officiating.

- No Protest Committee member can coach a Team in the Tournament
- All rulings of this committee are final and not subject to appeal
- All protests will be settled at the time they are lodged
 - No Match will be allowed to proceed until the protest is settled
- Protests can be related ONLY to the rules of play. Judgment calls are NOT subject to protest
- Allowable Protests are:
 - Misinterpretation of a playing rule
 - Failure of the 1st referee to apply the correct rule to a given situation
 - Failure to charge the correct penalty-sanction for a given fault
 - Scoring discrepancy
- A protest related to a judgment decision may result in a penalty (red card) being assessed to the coach.

ETHICS AND ELIGIBILITY

All Junior National Championship Events offer participants the ability to access normal due process channels should their eligibility to participate be in question. Procedures, including appeal options, are outlined above in this manual.

EVENT DIRECTOR and NCR TOURNAMENT STAFF

First level for hearing and resolving ethics and eligibility issues at NCRQ. Teams or individuals accused of committing violations of rules and regulations at NCRQ must meet with Event Director and select NCR Tournament Staff for resolution. The authority for the Event Director and NCR Tournament Staff begins with the arrival of a Team and individual participants in the Event's city or 48 hours prior to the first day of competition, whichever is earlier, and shall continue through the duration of the Event, through 30 minutes after the conclusion of the final Match of the Event.

Decisions of the Event Director and NCR Tournament Staff shall be conveyed immediately to the affected parties and may be appealed to the Event Ethics and Eligibility Appeals Committee.

EVENT APPEALS COMMITTEE DUTIES

The committee must meet as promptly as possible following the filing of an appeal or after an event director's recommendation of a sanction which would continue beyond the term of the event. The committee must conduct a full, fair, and objective hearing. Upon completion of the hearing, the committee should confer and render one of the following four decisions:

- **Uphold the decision**
- **Rescind the decision**
- **Modify or amend the decision** The amendment can be more or less restrictive than the event staff's decision.

- Rescind the decision *and* **render a new judgment.**
- The decisions of the Event Appeals Committee are final with respect to eligibility or privileges at the event; no further appeal is available at the event.

EVENT APPEALS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The committee consists of three members (age 21 or older), as follows:

- A committee chair appointed by the Event Director.
- Two other persons who have no connection to the persons involved in the incident. All coaches on the event roster are ineligible to serve on this committee.

REGION QUALIFIER DIRECTOR- INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDED FACILITY SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Minneapolis Convention Center Halls C and D court set-up conform to the safety guidelines in the current USAV Indoor Rules Book.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

All courts meet minimum court quality and size standards as stated in the current USAV Indoor Rules Book. Officials will enforce USAV National Rules and ground rules.

ATHLETIC TRAINERS

ATHLETIC TRAINERS

NCRQ will have a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) on site for the duration of the tournament. The ATC will meet NCR-USAV membership and safety requirements.

RESULTS REPORTING

Final Event competition results will be made available to USAV in a format requested by the USAV Events Department no later than two (2) days upon completion of the Event.

OFFICIALS

North Country Region will appoint a head official(s) for the Tournament, who will be part of the Protest Committee. The head official(s) will instruct all officials to enforce the rules outlined in the USAV Indoor Rules Book. All Match officials must be FULL MEMBERS of an RVA of USA Volleyball and verified as having a current, cleared USAV- approved background screen and be SafeSport trained.

USAV SANCTION REQUIREMENTS

All Tournaments Hosted by North Country Region are Sanctioned by USAV must adhere to the rules and regulations as contained in the 2025-2027 USAV Indoor Rules Book.