



Newsletter

COVERING THE COURT | SPRING 2026



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DID YOU KNOW?

What's happening in the Adult Division?

There are now TWO different avenues for adults to play volleyball in the Arizona Region.

1. Traditional Adult Competitive Tournaments – These are the traditional adult tournaments that have always been offered. The Traditional Adult Tournaments are the place to play if teams are very competitive and wish to play in Open Nationals in Orlando.
2. Pueblo Adult Tournaments - For the folks who still want to play but the rules for Traditional Adult Tournaments don't work for them, the Arizona Region is offering a brand new Alternative Adult Competition called Pueblo Adult Volleyball. Following the New England Region model, the Arizona Region will be testing out an Alternative Adult form of competition (aka Pueblo Adult Tournaments) over the next two years. The new, Pueblo Adult Tournament will involve a few basic changes:
 - a. players and tournaments will be rated A, B, and C so teams are always playing against teams of similar skills levels;
 - b. rosters will NOT be frozen so players can build a different team roster for each tournament;
 - c. the size of each tournament will be limited so tournament days finish earlier in the day;
 - d. initially the teams will officiate their own matches to help keep entry fees low; and
 - e. teams that finish in first place will have their entry fee refunded.

FROM THE 'COMMISH'

HAROLD CRANSWICK

COMMISSIONER | ARIZONA REGION OF USA VOLLEYBALL

Your Voice Matters To Us

The Arizona Region spent a great deal of resources to put out a questionnaire and survey of club directors last summer. The response rate was roughly 1 in 3, but insights and ideas were shared that helped the Region take some action regarding our athletes.

Several questions were asked about the newly established 10's division. The survey took results and came up with the following for these new players:

We allowed boys to play in the **U10 division** with a limit of 2 on the court at the same time. The division was put into a round robin format with matches lasting 45 minutes instead of a traditional Region match schedule. More emphasis was put on participation instead of winning. Also, to that end, the respondents did not want a Regional Championship for this beginning age group and suggested clubs take care of any end of season accolades and awards. Finally, a group of Club Directors with U10's programs are asked to come together and create modified rules to help the division and its athletes grow and succeed.

Another question was answered regarding the **U11-U12 teams** where it was suggested they all start in the Club Division and then use the Seeding Tournament to earn spots in the Championship Division.

Regarding the mandatory **Score/Ref clinics**, the majority of the respondents agreed that these Clinics for Juniors AND coaches should incorporate a live scrimmage to provide on-the-job training for both. It was also suggested that the Region look into training electronic scorekeeping apps.

The survey suggested a desire to have the Region's Coach Developer create "New Coaches Clinics," some to be held in the summer.

On the question of divisions within the Region, the majority of respondents agreed that **Junior Girls' teams** that participate in out-of-state events, including National events such as National Qualifiers, should only participate in the Open Division or the Championship Division. Club Directors with Open Division teams expressed support for the idea of playing 2-day Region Open Tournaments prior to National Qualifiers.



office@azregionvolleyball.org | www.azregionvolleyball.org

FROM THE 'COMMISH' CONTINUED...

Most of the respondents agreed that teams below the top 36 should use the automatic 3-match approach in Region Championships. For those teams that enter the Region Championship Tournaments and forfeit a match, they will be penalized with a \$200 fine. It was also suggested that the Region break out the **Club 13's from the Club 14's and the same with the Club 15's and Club 16's.**

Most of the Club Directors agreed that the Region should continue to schedule the **Region Championship Tournament in April** as it has in the past knowing that some players will have a scheduling conflict. However, they did not support the idea of using the AZNCQ as the Open Division Region Championship but did support the idea of the Region scheduling an Open Division Region Championship.

The survey also told us that the **AZNCQ Tournaments** should be only for those teams that are intending to play for a Bid and that the Region should increase its efforts to encourage teams that are traveling 2 or more times during the season to enter the AZNCQ tournament. It was suggested that bracket play for Sunday at the AZNCQ be enacted and that the Region should break the tournament into age-specific groups instead of mixed age groups. It was also agreed upon that a "new" Vulture Peak Tournament (potentially referred to as "Copper State Challenge") should be held on the same weekend as an AZNCQ.

As you can see, several points were addressed in the Region's questionnaire and survey, helping to guide the Region and continue to offer what's best for our membership.

Please, the next time a survey is sent out, take the time to give your responses and have a voice in the Arizona Region.

HAROLD CRANSWICK

Commissioner | Arizona Region of USA Volleyball

DID YOU KNOW CONTINUED...

What's happening in the Junior Division?

1. The Spring Junior Forum is coming soon. Watch for more information. Club Directors are encouraged to submit topics, ideas and/or concerns to the Junior Division Representative and Region Office so they can be added to the agenda.
2. A record number of teams are participating in the Junior Division Open, Championship and Club Divisions this season.
3. Several new facilities have opened up across the Region and have offered to host tournaments. Staff have visited three so far this year and each will be used based on cost, need, division, and availability.
4. The results of last summer's Region Club Director's questionnaire and survey helped us shape changes to better accommodate younger age groups, helped us align more with what Club's wanted and needed AND gave us some insights we appreciated and, in some cases, acted upon. (For a synopsis of those changes and insights, look at the article in the newsletter) The Survey questions were based on the topics discussed at the 2025 Spring Junior Forum. The response rate for the Survey was much higher than previous surveys conducted by the Region and clearly showed the importance of Club Director input in helping bring important topics into focus and the value of having ALL Club Directors participate when surveys go out

What's happening in the Officials' Division?

1. There has been a significant increase in the number of adult officials joining the Region.

CONTINUED PAGE 11....





TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL AZHP TRAINING & TRYOUTS

AZHP clinics get underway in May and this is such an exciting time for Arizona athletes!

Clinics are open to *all* junior players and also serve as the official tryouts for our Arizona Region All-Star teams. That means every rep, every drill, and every interaction matters.

The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball carefully selects highly talented, experienced coaches to lead our #AZHP delegation... and yes, those same coaches are right there at clinics running tryouts and evaluating athletes.

So how can players stand out?

💧 Responsibility Matters

Coaches are watching for more than just volleyball skills.

They notice athletes who:

- Arrive on time
- Bring and manage their own water
- Keep track of their gear
- Are warmed up and ready to step on the court and compete

Responsibility shows maturity and maturity builds trust.

🔥 Hustle + Heart

Energy is contagious. Athletes can separate themselves by:

- Hustling between drills
- Listening closely to instruction
- **Applying feedback immediately**
- Encouraging teammates

Coaches love players who compete hard and lift others up.

🧠 Coachability Counts

Athletic ability is important... but it's not the whole story.

A strong work ethic, respectful attitude, and willingness to learn often make the biggest impression. Coaches are building teams that will represent Arizona on a national stage. They're looking for athletes who show dedication, discipline, and pride in the process.

Every drill is an opportunity. Every moment is part of your audition.

We can't wait to see this year's AZHP athletes shine. 🌟



SPONSOR THE ARIZONA REGION ALL-STAR DELEGATION

Contact Ron Pelham 520.661.4695 or azhp@azregionvolleyball.org

USAV ALL-STAR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clinics & Tryouts!



2026

COLUMBUS OHIO



Arizona Region High Performance: Forming a Delegation of Six Teams for the 2026 All-Star Championships

Each year, the Arizona Region of USA Volleyball conducts elite tryouts to assemble six powerhouse teams, featuring the AZ Region's highly talented junior athletes.

These teams are poised to compete at the USA All-Star Championships, the pinnacle of volleyball excellence across all 40 USA Volleyball regions.

What Are the All-Star Championships?

The USA Volleyball All-Star Championships represent a national, USAV-sanctioned tournament uniting elite athletes selected from the 40 regional associations of USA Volleyball.

This prestigious event is open not only to USAV regional All-Star delegations but also to international teams representing various National Federations of the FIVB.

2026 All-Star Championships

- When: July 22nd - 26th (Travel July 20th - 27th)
- Where: Columbus, Ohio, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center

- ✓ Train with the Best
- ✓ Elevate your Game
- ✓ Tryout for a Team
- ✓ Save these Dates

Arizona Region High Performance - Teams Selection and Tryouts Clinics

AZHP is set to select three girls' teams and three boys' teams, comprising:

- Boys Teams: U15, U17, U19
- Girls Teams: Two U15 teams, U17 team

To facilitate this selection process, AZHP will host clinics which also serve as tryouts.

Clinic Tryouts Dates: (Location TBA)

- May 15th
- May 16th
- May 17th

AZHP Registration Opens March 30th.
www.azregionvolleyball.org/highperformance

*Every athlete interested in trying out for a team must attend at least one clinic or tryout session. **Attending all three sessions provides athletes with an invaluable opportunity to showcase their work ethic, teamwork, responsibility, and athleticism.**

FOLLOW #AZHP IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay connected with us for behind-the-scenes moments and High Performance updates as our All-Star squad prepares for the #allstarvbchamps. #USAVRegions



AZ REGION'S ADULT VOLLEYBALL

Arizona Region Launching Pueblo Adult Volleyball

The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball is excited to begin building a brand-new **Pueblo Adult Volleyball** program, designed to expand opportunities for adult players across the state.

On February 22, 2026, players from around the Valley gathered for an Adult Volleyball Open House, where participants shared ideas, met fellow players, and helped shape the future of adult volleyball in Arizona. During the session, Arizona Region staff listened to feedback on how to best use gym space for tournaments, explained the player rating system used to create balanced competition, reviewed costs and fees, and encouraged networking among players interested in forming teams.

To help organize competitive divisions, the Arizona Region uses a simple A-D player rating system, allowing athletes to identify their skill level and compete with similarly matched players.

PLAYER RATING DESCRIPTION

A

An "A" player demonstrates advanced skills such as a college (or higher) level player.

B

A "B" player is talented and has played the game on an organized basis such as a high school team.

C

A "C" player is relatively new to the game but has played on an organized recreational or city league.

D

A "D" player is brand new to the sport - has little to no training or experience with organized volleyball.

If you are interested in participating in future Pueblo Adult Volleyball tournaments or leagues, we invite you to join our mailing list.

Please email the following information to erichbke@msn.com:

- Name
- Phone number
- Email address
- Are you a current Arizona Region member?
- Your self-rating (A, B, C, or D) using the chart below
- Your location in Arizona (for example: Prescott, Central Phoenix, Tucson, etc.)
- Whether you are interested in 6v6, 4v4, or Coed play

FOR MORE...

ERIC HODGSON

Outreach Director

Arizona Region of USA Volleyball

erichbke@msn.com | 623-703-0496

WHAT MAKES PUEBLO ADULT VOLLEYBALL DIFFERENT FROM THE AZ REGION'S TRADITIONAL ADULT TOURNAMENTS?

1. Teams can create a brand new roster for each tournament during the season (no frozen roster)
2. No uniform rules - Uniforms don't have to match as long as each jersey has a unique number (no duplicates)
3. All players/teams/tournaments will be matched by player ratings.
4. Entries are limited to a max of six teams
5. The tournament day is shorter (should end before the dinner hour)
6. **Cash prizes for first and second place teams**



AZ REGION OFFICIATING NEWS

Looking Back: December 2025

The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball proudly celebrated a major milestone as several of our outstanding officials were selected to work the First and Second Rounds of the NCAA Women's Volleyball Tournament.

This prestigious assignment reflects the professionalism, experience, and commitment to excellence that Arizona Region officials bring to the court every day.

🎉 Congratulations to the selected officials:

- Ronald Pelham
- Robert Cosby
- Kailee Rowe
- Dean Hoskin
- Nikki Kathol
- Sevastian Malcolm
- Matt Hudson

Your dedication to the sport continues to elevate the standard of officiating and proudly represent the #AZRegion on the national stage. We are incredibly proud to see our officials recognized at this level.



Arizona Region to Introduce Digital Scoring at 18s Arizona National Qualifiers

The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball is taking a significant step toward modernizing the tournament experience — and better preparing our athletes for the national stage. Beginning March 7–8 at the 18s Arizona National Qualifiers (AZNQ), the Region began using VolleyStation Score as the primary scoring platform at our tournaments.

Why VolleyStation, and Why Now?

USA Volleyball has adopted VolleyStation Score as the official scoring platform at all National Championships. By introducing it here at home first, the Arizona Region is giving our teams a meaningful advantage — players, coaches, and working teams will already be comfortable with the app before they ever travel to a qualifiers or championships where it's required. Rather than encountering the technology for the first time under the pressure of a national event, Arizona teams will arrive with confidence, familiarity, and one less thing to worry about.

What is VolleyStation Score?

VolleyStation Score is a simple, intuitive app that can be run on any smartphone or tablet. The app is rule-compliant by design — it prevents actions that would violate volleyball rules, automatically tracks substitutions, manages timeouts, and keeps match flow within regulations. One of the biggest advantages for tournament operations is that VolleyStation pushes results instantly to AES — meaning ties are resolved faster, schedules are updated in real time, and teams spend less time waiting to find out where and when they play next.

What Teams Need to Know

Working teams at the 18s AZNQ on March 7–8 used both VolleyStation Score and the traditional paper scoresheet during matches. The paper scoresheet will continue to be completed as usual, but VolleyStation served as the primary source for the official score. We strongly encourage all teams to download the app and practice with it for future tournaments. Teams should bring at least three devices with screen timeout disabled to ensure uninterrupted scoring throughout each match. VolleyStation Score is a free download on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

The Bigger Picture

This is just the beginning. The Arizona Region's move to VolleyStation Score is part of a broader commitment to aligning our tournaments with the national standard — so that when our teams step onto the court at USA Volleyball's biggest events, they're ready for everything the competition brings. With faster results, smoother scheduling, and better-prepared teams, VolleyStation is a win for everyone in the gym.

For questions, contact play@azregionvolleyball.org.

FIND OUT MORE...

Kailee Jodarski Rowe
Arizona Region | Officials Competition Assigner



**LEARN THE
OFFICIAL
USA VOLLEYBALL
HAND SIGNALS FOR
INDOOR
VOLLEYBALL**

[usavolleyball.org/resource/
officials-hand-signals-for-indoor](https://usavolleyball.org/resource/officials-hand-signals-for-indoor)

 #AZRegion

office@azregionvolleyball.org | www.azregionvolleyball.org



FROM THE ARIZONA REGION OF USA VOLLEYBALL



TO ALL CLUBS, DIRECTORS, AND COACHES FROM THE ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

In the past number of years, there has been a confusing as well as undefined trend that has forced a considered response by the Region and the Ethics and Compliance Committee (ECC). Currently, Region clubs are affiliating themselves with privately owned gym facilities. They are offering training clinics or sessions and other advertised events to athletes under contract through club websites, social media, group chats, and other communications. Foremost, the Region supports the growth of the sport and the advancement of the athlete's skill and knowledge. However, the integrity of this goal has been marred in the past by dubious behaviors of those willing to commit illegal recruiting for the sake of more teams, more income, or other internal incentives. Open gyms, training clinics, private lessons, etc., is a potential breeding ground for illegal recruiting, as have been reported in the Region Complaint System throughout each season. Please find below the Region's recommended guidelines for any of your club or gym training opportunities, which we hope will prevent and dispel any misperception or rumors.

1. Respect current and active club contracts and commitments. Unless otherwise clarified in the contract, commitments expire at the end of GJNC/BJNC. Open training invitees still require committed club permission. Documented approval will be your best protection.
2. Keep training dialog club-generic, free of club promotion, preference or bias. Hard-selling the athlete/parent never fares well.
3. In the interim between Boys' club and high school, be aware of club affiliations, as well as AIA requirements and eligibility. Generic technical instruction without club or self-promotion is always the best endeavor. This also applies to the wearing of club uniforms or other training wear that may unintentionally advertise.
4. Although we recognize gym/facility owners to be private businesses, your USAV/AZ Region membership still establishes affiliation and compliance. We ask for your support in upholding and maintaining the highest level of integrity in our Region.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me on my dedicated ECO cell: (480) 973-9885. Thank you for your consideration and have a great remainder of the season.

FOR MORE...

JR Salima

Ethics Compliance Officer
Arizona Region of USA Volleyball
Mobile: (602) 614-9263 | ECO Email: eco@azregionvolleyball.org
Email: jrsalima331@yahoo.com

CONGRATS!

OFFICIALS PASSING REGIONAL EVALS

Angee Gadola, Alexena Radway, Jason Hansom, Shadena Colter, Eva B. Forney, Sarah Dorin, Aldo Arellano, Mark Byrne-Quinn, Kevin Camp



SPONSOR

Interested in supporting the 2026 Arizona Region All-Star Delegation?

Contact Ron Pelham:

520.661.4695 or

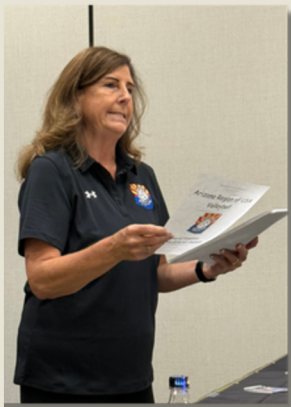
azhp@azregionvolleyball.org



AZHP 2026



www.azregionvolleyball.org/safesport



MID SEASON CHECK-IN

Lisa Naughton | Registrar AZ Region of USA Volleyball

It's hard to believe the season is almost half over. There have been so many changes this season and I'd like to thank you all for your understanding and cooperation during this transition period. I hope that you recognize how hard the region staff has worked to streamline our practices and accommodate each and every one of you as well. It can be a very difficult task with the way the region numbers have grown over the last few years.

All that being said, I would like to remind you of a big change that will be coming our way next season. USAV has worked to develop their "own" member management system which means Sports Engine will no longer be where we go to register members. USAV has formed a team to test this new system prior to it going live for the 26-27 Season. I am happy to say that I am a part of that team, and look forward to learning about the new focus to make registration an easier process for our members. I will share new updates as they become available to me.

Please continue to do what you do and let's end this season on a positive note!

Stay in the Game: Your Volleyball Journey Doesn't End at Graduation

Calling all graduating seniors in the Arizona Region! Your time as a junior athlete may be ending, but your place in the volleyball community doesn't have to. The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball offers many ways to stay connected to the sport you love — whether as a player, coach, official, or volunteer.

We invite you to take a moment to scan the QR code and complete a quick survey to share your interests. Let us know how you'd like to stay involved and how we can help you continue your volleyball journey.

Congratulations on your graduation, and we look forward to keeping you part of the Arizona Region volleyball family.



EACH PERSON MATTERS



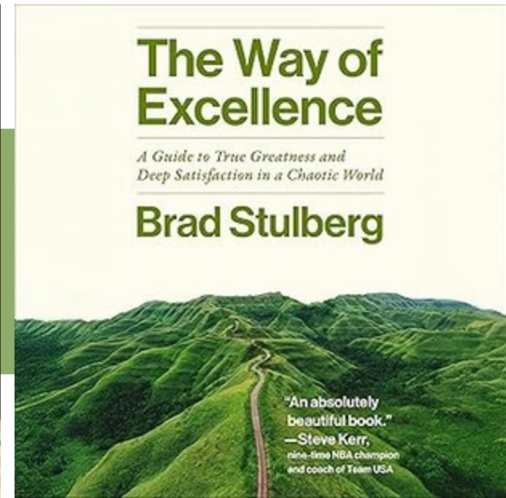
“

Let me introduce you to this great group of girls. They are the Valley Heat 12-2 team. I was able to meet with them at their practice facility. We talked about treating each member on the team as though each person matters. I did the tooth paste analogy. If you never have seen this I would love to come out and show this to you and your club team. You can invite me to talk to your girls. They forgot to make this important and promised me they would do that more. I pinkie swore to come watch their next club competition and we dedicated the rest of the 2026 season to our teammates. How about all of you, are you ready to play for each other? Let's get after it.

Cindy Kirk | Junior Division Representative

”

The Finite vs. Infinite Coaching Bridge



Unless you are or have coached, it's hard to describe to an outsider all that falls upon your shoulders. Whereas coaches from previous eras might just be concerned about implementing practices and tactics for games, coaches today have to wear many more hats: psychologists, politicians, advocates, researchers and oh yea, implementing practices and tactics for games. It's a heavy load that requires a unique balance.

Best-selling author and researcher on human development, Brad Stulberg's newest book, "The Way of Excellence: A Guide to True Greatness and Deep Satisfaction in a Chaotic World (2026) talks about the idea of balancing two phases of training our athletes.

Stulberg talks about the idea of finite v. infinite goals and mindsets. Defined, finite goals are the traditional outcome-oriented targets you see in sports and coaching:

- Winning a particular game or championship
- Achieving a specific performance metric
- Hitting a set deadline or time frame

These goals are important because they give direction, clarity, and motivation — they can catalyze effort and provide measurable markers of progress. But if we focus only on them, Stulberg argues, we fall into a finite game mindset: win/lose, start/finish, good/bad. The fixation on results can make people fragile, short-sighted, anxious, and overly attached to outcomes rather than the underlying growth that really matters.

The other side of the coin is infinite goals (or an infinite mindset): the purpose isn't to reach an endpoint, but to keep playing, keep learning, and keep becoming better — without treating mastery as "complete."

- You remain focused on the ongoing process.
- You care about how you train, teach, and grow, not just whether you get a trophy.
- You expand your craft, understanding, and identity with time.

In Stulberg's view, coaching — and excellence itself — is like an infinite game: you aren't coaching to be "finished" or to claim final victory. You're coaching to keep improving both yourself and those you lead. That means constantly adjusting, reflecting, and nurturing growth rather than simply winning now and stopping.

Stulberg points out that finite goals aren't bad — they help structure effort and focus but relying on them exclusively breeds narrow thinking and emotional fragility.

Infinite goals orient people toward process, curiosity, resilience, and sustainable improvement. Coaches that employ infinite mindsets invest in the long game — developing athletes' character, decision-making, adaptability, and capacity for learning — not just short-term results. Stulberg sees that in the infinite focus, success is measured not by a single "win," but by an unfolding, lifelong trajectory of growth and engagement in the craft itself.

While the author points out the importance of focusing on the finite, the deepest fulfillment and the most durable performance come not from chasing a final result but from falling in love with the pursuit itself — the ongoing training, learning, adaptation, and transformation that define true excellence.

In Stulberg's coaching context, an infinite goal isn't vague nonsense — it's a mindset that allows you and your athletes to balance ambition with presence, to learn from setbacks, and to treat success as a process rather than an endpoint.

As a Coach, balancing the finite with the infinite is a full-time pursuit: difficult and malleable but essential to the development of the total athlete.



“Do What You Have To Do”

Masae Kasai was exhausted.

She was employed at the Dai Nippon Spinning company in Osaka working her shift all day and then donning her practice gear to play setter and captain for her team, Nichibo Kaizuka. The practices would sometimes drift into the early hours of the morning, 2-3 a.m. Then up again in the morning for another day in the textile factory and practice to follow.

Kasai was one of a dozen young women who had been researched, recruited and relocated to the factory, later to be called Nichibo, for the express purpose of volleyball. Before National programs and identifying camps, city or regional industry would often build teams for high level competitions.

Just 15 years before, with many of the players and coaches still children, they saw the effects of WWII firsthand as their family elders fought and sometimes died. Japan, as a country, was defeated both on the battlefield but also socially. They were rebuilding a country and the hearts and minds of a population that had suffered a trauma that would not be long forgotten.

In the late 1950's and early '60's, the USSR was the world power in women's volleyball. Under the direction of Coach Hirofumi Daimatsu, the Nichibo team was built and trained, using the strengths of his players, to put a dent in the Russian dominance. Daimatsu, nicknamed “Demon Daimatsu” was relentless in both the schedule and rigor of his training sessions. “There is time for nothing else. The players know absolutely no other life. They do it because they choose to.” He said about his philosophy on training which would routinely include 1000 reps, per player, per night. Players often cried during sessions from exhaustion and frustration, but they pushed through showing discipline and loyalty to Daimatsu and each other.

A former soldier in WWII, Daimatsu set out to change the game. With his players smaller statures, (an average height of 5 feet 7 inches, compared to the much taller, stronger Russians) he pioneered innovative defensive techniques to use speed, diving, precision and stamina to overcome their size disadvantage. This style of quickness and misdirection earned the girls the nickname, “The Witches of the Orient.”

In 1960, Japan lost to the Soviets in the World Championships, but the gap was closing. In 1961 they embarked on a European tour which saw them win 24 straight matches giving them confidence in where they were heading. For many of the players it was their first time out of Japan. They were confused by many of the foods and took to carrying instant ramen and rice with them. Players joked about “white bread with butter and jam” as a luxury.

Finally, two years later the girls broke through, defeating the Russians at the FIVB 1962 World championships. It was the first major international title in a team sport for Japan in history.

Now, as the best women's volleyball team in the world, Kasai was ready to call it a career at age 29. Most of the team were in their mid to late 20's and marriage and children was on the agenda. But volleyball had been added to the Olympics for the first time in 1964, and the games were being held in Tokyo. Pressure from the Olympic Organizing Committee, the Japan Volleyball Association and the Corporation they played for was intense.

“I felt like I was done with volleyball,” Kasai said flatly, wanting to get married and start a family. “But at the time, I couldn't quit. And I knew my family, my parents couldn't tell me to quit either. When I told them I was in, they just said, ‘Do what you have to do’ and sent me off with a smile.”

Two more years of working through the day and intense 10-hour trainings into the morning. Daimatsu pushed the team harder knowing that anything short of a gold medal would be seen as an epic failure, emphasizing commitment to each other and to national pride. The team realized a country had put their identity and soul behind these dozen women from a textile factory in Osaka. Fair or not, the expectations were staggering, the pressure unrelenting. Captain Kasai said before the games, “We have never experienced defeat. We must win.” embracing the moment and holding her team to the highest of standards.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics began with the team wearing their Nichibo uniform instead of a Japanese kit. The game then was played with side out scoring, where the serving team could only win a point on their serve. The girls started out trouncing the U.S. team 15-1, 15-5, 15-2. They followed that up with straight set wins over Romania and Korea. They dropped a set to Poland in their win and now faced their nemesis, the USSR in the gold medal match.

The final was watched on television by 2/3rds of the households in Japan and remains the most watched sporting event in Japanese television history. Over the 1 hour and 29 minutes, the “Witches of the Orient” put a golden touch on the first Olympic volleyball competition, and with a net call on a tight Soviet pass, swept the Russians 15-11, 15-8, 15-13. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coM7vkwh3js>) The Nichibo women had finished what they had set out to do. It was Japan's first Olympic gold medal in a women's sport in 28 years but more importantly, it was a defining moment in Japanese post war sport and society.

Kasai, who was credited with keeping the team focused and playing for each other amid intense public scrutiny and expectations, never felt the heaviness. “I still can't forget the cheers from all around the country. It never felt like pressure to me. We had so much support that our only option was to win the gold!”

She was inducted into the International Volleyball Hall of Fame in 2008 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSOgJrubpt4>) but passed away before Tokyo was awarded the 2020 Olympic games. One teammate said of Kasai, “She was a very demanding person but I'm glad I went through with it and that's because of her.”

A three-time Olympian who viewed Kasai as a mentor reflects on her importance to the sport in Japan. “We have to keep the fire she lit in the game going, all of us together.”

The 2028 Olympic Games will be held in Los Angeles. The Volleyball action starts Saturday, July 15, 2028.

DID YOU KNOW CONTINUED...

2. Many new junior players have indicated an interest in the Junior Official Development Program.
3. More experienced adult officials have expressed an interest in serving as Mentors for the incoming JODP participants.
4. Some of the experienced National Officials will be helping the Region to introduce the new electronic scoring (known as VolleyStation or VS app) that is widely used across the country at National Qualifiers.
5. With the increase in the number of officials, the Region Competition Assignor is able to cover more and more courts each tournament weekend.

What's happening with the Arizona Region High Performance/USA Volleyball All-Star Program?

1. The Arizona Region of USA Volleyball is exploring additional ways to let interested junior boys and girls learn about the opportunities associated with our High Performance program.
2. Participation in our High Performance experience gives players an opportunity to learn from different coaches – most of whom are college coaches.
3. Watch for big news coming from the High Performance Director Ron Pelham.

Bear in mind that the AZ Region is likely to experience more changes in the coming months and years as the leadership at USA Volleyball seeks to introduce new ideas. The Arizona Region is working hard to accommodate changes while still keeping costs as low as possible for members while protecting and appreciating the staff who work year-round on the members' behalf.

See you on the court,

Harold Cranswick

Commissioner | Arizona Region of USA Volleyball

Rita Stubbs Volleyball Camps

Serve and Pass Camp:

May 26 - 28 (K-12th)

Mini Camp:

May 26 - 28 (1st-8th)

Position Camp:

July 6 - 9 (6th-12th)

Intermediate Camp:

July 6 - 7 (6th-12th)

Elite Camp:

July 8 - 9 (6th-12th)



ARIZONA REGION PARENT INFORMATION NETWORK ON YOUTUBE



Parents play a vital role in the success and development of young athletes. That's why the Arizona Region of USA Volleyball is excited to highlight the Parent Information Network.

This informative YouTube series is designed to support volleyball parents with helpful insights on topics that matter most – from navigating the club volleyball experience to understanding how to best support your athlete on and off the court.

www.youtube.com/@arizonaregionofusavolleyball

NAU VOLLEYBALL

2026 CAMPS

ALL SKILLS

JULY 11-13

TEAM CAMP

JULY 14-16

ADVANCED CAMP

JULY 17-19

ALL SKILLS &
ADVANCED DAY CAMPS

JULY 24-26

TRAVEL CAMP: JUNE & JULY DATES AVAILABLE

NAUVBCAMP.COM



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL CAMP

7-13 Years Old: July 11th 8-10:30am

14-18 Years Old: July 18th 8-10:30am

Contact: Taylor Galliano

Taylor.galliano@southmountaincc.edu

South Mountain Community College



Starting in April, Art Of Coaching is hosting a nationwide series of immersive coaching clinics that can be attended in person or online. These 1.5-day events are designed for coaches at every level and focus on what matters most: practical training, honest conversations, and ideas you can actually use with your team.

store.theartofcoachingvolleyball.com/coaching-clinics

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KIDS CAMPS	June 10-11, July 14-15
JR HIGH ALL SKILLS	May 28-29, July 9-10
SUN DEVIL EXPERIENCE	May 30, June 9, June 12
ELITE ALL SKILLS	July 7-8
ATTACKER/SETTER	June 10, July 14
LIBERO	June 11, July 15
SERVING CLINICS	May 28, May 29, July 9, July 10
TEAM CAMP	July 11-12



*Sun Devil Volleyball Camps are open to any and all players who qualify only by number, age, grade, and gender!
 **This Camp is not affiliated with or sponsored by USA Volleyball and the Phoenix are represented separately and are used with the permission of the Arizona Board of Regents.



PROUD TO ANNOUNCE:

The Arizona Region is the HOST for the 2027 USA Volleyball All-Star Championships!!

We are looking for Arizona Businesses to Partner for this International Event

Contact Ron Pelham:

520.661.4695 or azhp@azregionvolleyball.org



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