



PLAYER/PARENT HANDBOOK



## Message from the Director

10 years go when my wife and I relocated to Missoula the first thing I did was contact th nearest, most successful youth volleyball club in the area, the Montana Volleyball Academy (MVA). I had been involved with directing and managing volleyball clubs for a number of years already and wanted to bring my knowledge of the sport and business to Missoula. In 2010 I began coaching for MVA as the 18 National coach and in 2014 I was given the opportunity to take over MVA as the director and owner. Working in youth sports is an opportunity to mentor motivated youth and teach the sport that has brought me many joys and taught me many lessons. I thouroughly enjoy being able to use MVA to enrich the wonderful community in which it abides and hope your interactions and experiences with MVA are bright and fulfilling.

The player/parent handbook is designed to educate you about our organization, our coaching philosophy and how to be successful with in MVA. I hope this handbook will provide you information that will be useful to your decision on whether to play for MVA during the upcoming club season.

Best,  
Nate Michael

## Mission Statement

Our mission at the Montana Volleyball Academy is to develop a sporting culture of exceptional work ethic based in a mutual love and respect for teammates, opponents and the game itself. MVA will establish a supportive environment in which young people are provided a comprehensive and dynamic education in the life-long sport of volleyball. MVA is dedicated to enhancing and developing values that foster leadership, responsibility, self-discipline and an appreciation for health and wellness.

To acheive this mission, MVA will work to:

- Generate a staff of tremendously qualified coaches, who consistantly demonstarte the highest level of personal conduct and integrity.
- Inspire young student-athletes to work towards fulfilling thier greatest potential as volleyball players, students and proactive community leaders.
- Create and sustain a positive, competitive atmosphere in which all members of MVA are challenged and encouraged to ephasize selfworth, mutual respect, sportsmanship and team work.
- Provide appropriate competitive opportunities for teams of every level with in MVA.
- Work towards recognition as the premier “teaching” club in the state of Montana and the Evergreen Region through cohesive and cooperative interaction among the coaching staff, and the provision of practices which develop the highest possible level of technique in both individual skills and team strategy.
- Educate every member of MVA in matters directly relating to the development of life-long health for young athletes including injury prevention, nutrition, eating habits, and mental conditioning.



## About the Director

Nate Michael brings over 20 years of coaching experience from the youth and collegiate level to the Montana Volleyball Academy and is proud to direct MVA to the next level.

Nate has been the head coach of the MVA 18 National team since 2011. In that time Nate has coached 40 seniors that went on to play collegiate volleyball. Also in that time the MVA 18 National team has qualified to the Girls Junior National Championships four times winning the Evergreen Regional Championship in 2012 and 2015. In Nate's 9 years as the head coach of the 18 National team he has finished in the regional top-ten for all 9 and only twice been out of the top five.

For the 2009-2010 club season, Nate directed Bexar County Volleyball Academy in San Antonio, Texas. In his first and only season with BCVA he Head Coached the 18 Asics and Co-Head Coached the 17 Asics. The 18 Asics finished with a 34-14 overall record and earned an American Bid to the Junior National Championships. The Bexar 17 Asics finished 6th in the Tour of Texas and qualified in the National Division for the Junior National Championships.

Before Bexar County Volleyball Academy, Nate was an administrator at Club West Volleyball, in Southern California. Since its conception in 2002, Nate played a crucial role in bringing the humble 8-team club to the 2nd largest in its region with 29 competitive teams and over 300 athletes. In Nate's final year with the club, they qualified 7 teams to Junior Nationals. While at Club West Nate coached at the 14's, 16's, 17's and 18's age groups as well as design training curriculums for volleyball athletes and the club's head coaches.

Beyond coaching at the club level, Nate was an assistant coach at Claremont McKenna College (Claremont, CA) for 5 years and also was the Head Coach at Ontario Christian High School, where in 2008 he was named the Christian Conference Coach of the Year.

As a player in 1999 and 2000 Nate attended Grossmont College. He helped lead the "Griffins" to two consecutive final four appearances and was named to the OEC All-Conference team in 2000 as well as leading the state in aces. Nate played his final two seasons at the University of La Verne. He was a two-year captain and in 2002 Nate was twice named AVCA National Player of the Week in leading the "Leos" to a National Runner-Up. He was named to the All-Tournament Team at the Final Four in 2002. At the end of his ULV career, Nate ranked in the top 5 in nearly every offensive category in the program's history. He was also named team MVP and MVP of the 2002 Molten Invitational Tournament.

Nate also spent several years as an outdoor player earning his "AAA" rating on the beach and spent three years playing in AVP events. Nate's highest finish in a professional event was 33rd in the Redondo Beach Open. As a prep-athlete, Nate was recognized as one of the top 50 high school recruits in the country in Volleyball Magazine's Fab 50 list.

Nate and his wife Allison have two sons, Wyatt and Carson, and would like to thank everyone at the Montana Volleyball Academy for such a great 7 years and they know the best is yet to come!



## Tryouts

MVA will hold open tryouts each year to select players for our teams. Our tryouts will comply with Evergreen Region policies that include player pre-registration, tryout date guidelines and tryout fees.

### Tryout Preparation:

- Download and fill out all the needed paperwork before you come to the tryout. Visit [www.gomva.com](http://www.gomva.com) for all necessary forms.
- Be sure to get there early. Thirty minutes before the scheduled start time is best.
- Contact us to let us know if you will be arriving late because you are coming from another tryout.
- Wear something colorful or bright so that coaches can identify you even if they can't see your number.
- Great effort turns heads and is remembered. Avoid being tentative in your play but know the difference between being aggressive and playing recklessly.
- Let the lead tryout coach know if you are trying out while injured or have to leave early for whatever reason.
- Talk to us before or after tryouts as much as you want! We value the opportunity to answer any of your questions.

### Playing Up:

MVA asks that everyone tryout at their appropriate age level. There are some occasions where MVA asks a player if they would like to join a roster above their appropriate age level but this decision is solely at the discretion of MVA and its directors. Players that have interest in playing above their age level may contact MVA before tryouts for consultation.

### The Selection Process:

MVA will look to keep roster sizes to a minimum number to promote more playing time for those on the team. Silver (local), Red (reduced regional) and Sapphire (Bitterroot Valley) teams will have a maximum of 9 players. National and Elite (expanded regional) teams will have a minimum of 9 and maximum of 11. We will have multiple coaches evaluating players during our tryouts. Each year during tryouts we consider every athlete as a prospective player. Players that can not attend tryouts due to extenuating circumstances can still be considered for a roster as long as club management is notified beforehand. We will evaluate as best as we can during the duration of the tryout. Selection will be based upon the following criteria:

- A player's performance during the tryout - skill level, effort, competitiveness and interaction with other athletes.
- Our perception of that player's athletic potential – what she may be able to do over the course of the season.
- Our perception of the coachability of the player.
- Evaluations of players during the past club season, camps or the current high school season.
- Being in good standing with the Montana Volleyball Academy (both past and present ownership) and USA Volleyball.
- Past history of parental involvement or behavior.

### Notification:

MVA will form teams over the following week and make initial calls to offer roster spots. Depending player acceptance of initial calls, additional rounds of calls be will made until rosters are completed. Players who are selected for an MVA team will be required to attend a meeting with their parent or guardian to sign contracts



and make initial deposits. The time and location of the meeting along with specific deposit amount will be discussed during initial phone call. MVA will not notify players who have not made a roster. MVA encourages athletes to try out for multiple clubs to ensure that the athlete can get placed on the team that best suits their needs. Parents are encouraged to call to inquire about the status of a player's application during the process.

## Multi-Sport Athletes

MVA encourages athletes to play every sport they are passionate about. MVA "Silver" and "Red" teams are geared for players who have busier schedules with other sports. MVA also has multi-sport athletes on "Elite" and "National" teams every year. MVA wants every prep athlete to experience their sports careers to the fullest. If you want to play basketball and MVA, please approach your coach about any possible conflicts. With a little planning and good communication most scheduling conflicts can be worked out.

## Parent Meeting

MVA has a mandatory parent meeting in early December. Location, date and times will be posted for each team on the club website after tryouts. We have several tasks that need to be completed during this meeting:

- Complete and turn in paperwork which includes the:
  - USAV Medical History and Release Form
  - Concussion Form
  - USAV Letter of Intent
  - USAV Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct Form
  - Parent Code of Conduct Form and Player Code of Conduct Form
- Payment of initial deposit (Specific deposit amount will be given when offered a roster spot)
- Sizing of player jerseys and/or warm-ups
- Parent meeting with your team's head coach

## Scorekeeper Clinic

Every player is required to attend a scorekeepers clinic. MVA will schedule their club clinic in January. The clinic is free for players or adult chaperones that wish to attend. If players are not able to attend the scheduled club clinic then they need to contact the club director to find out information on make-up clinic options. Players will not be put on a tournament roster until they have attended a scorekeeper clinic.



## Practice

MVA teams practice two or three times per week. Team practices will be two hours in length with the exception of MVA “Silver” teams which will practice for 90-minutes. Some teams may have additional specialty practices based upon coach preferences for their teams. Coaches will sometimes schedule additional practices in preparation for major tournaments. There are times when our practice schedule will change based on weather conditions or the team’s travel schedule. MVA will make every attempt to reschedule gym time during that week rather than losing a practice but may not be able to do so due to impacted gym schedules.

### **Practice Rules:**

Our focus with practice is to build team unity, increase their base knowledge of tactical volleyball skills and adequately prepare the team for competition. To achieve that, certain rules are required by all teams as detailed below:

- Every practice is important. It is expected that each player will exercise good time management skills so that scheduling conflicts are kept to a minimum.
- All athletes are expected to make every effort to attend practice. If a player must miss a practice, a telephone call or text (not email) to their head coach is expected at least 4 hours before practice. Only after attempting and failing to reach your head coach can a player contact a teammate to relay the message to the head coach. Advanced notice is expected if the missed practice is due to vacation, school function or another event scheduled in advance.
- Players who can only attend a half hour or 45 minutes of a practice because of another event should still come to practice. It is much better to get some practice time rather than miss the whole practice.
- Injured athletes who can attend school are expected to attend practice to support their team and be available to help where they can, even if they cannot physically participate in practice. Players with fever or stomach flu (diarrhea and/or vomiting) should not come to practice.
- Scheduled practice time is start time. Please arrive early enough to be dressed and completely ready for practice by start time. This usually requires arriving not less than 15 minutes before start time.
- MVA coaches will end their practice on time. If a coach wishes to practice for a longer amount of time the coach must contact players and parents beforehand so proper planning can take place.
- All practices are open and parents are welcome to observe practices at any time. Parents may not coach or offer instruction to their daughter or another team member at any time during practice. Parents are not permitted on the court. No shagging!

### **Practice Attendance:**

With MVA’s effort to promote better development and more playing time by forming smaller roster sizes, attendance is crucial to the team’s success. Any absence or tardiness must be reported to the coach beforehand. Any absence that is not communicated (other than a safety threatening or family emergency) will be considered an unexcused absence. All MVA coaches will take attendance at all practices and will follow these guidelines to dealing with unexcused absences.

- All unexcused absences can be dealt with physical conditioning consequence.
- Multiple unexcused absences will result in loss of playing time.
- Excessive unexcused absences may result in expulsion from MVA without being eligible for future return.



## Playing Time

Playing time, for many players and parents, is a central concern that can distract from our focus on the team's success and can often create divisions within the team. At MVA we want every player to be able to compete on the court and fulfill her competitive goals. In any case, every player will have an equal opportunity to compete for playtime within their position during practice and at tournaments. With the exception of "White" teams where all playing time will be distributed evenly in all cases, playing time can be determined by a number of factors.

- A player's practice attendance
- A player's ability to perform at the necessary level for a skill or position
- How a player's attitude adds to or detracts from the chemistry or performance of the team
- A player's past performance during the tournament or the last week of practice
- A player's effort and work ethic
- The importance of the match
- The needs of the team in the present as well as later in the season

Some generalizations can be made with regards to playtime issues.

- It is our goal that all players have some on-court role every match. There may be exceptions with players recovering from injuries, problems with adherence to team rules/policies or when teams are trying to win a bid/move to the gold bracket of tournament play in a multi-day tournament.
- Playtime is generally more equal at the younger age groups and lower competitive levels.
- Playtime will vary by position with some positions playing all the way around the court and some playing only front or back row.
- Playtime is more equal during pool play than in tournament play.
- Playtime may be more equal earlier in the season as coaches are exploring different lineups and identifying starters.
- Playtime may be more equal in one-day regional tournaments compared to multi-day tournaments, qualifiers or Regional tournaments.
- Position and time on court are determined by the needs of her current club team, not her history from past seasons or the current needs of her school team.

All playing time is decided by the coaches and is not negotiable. Coaches have the right to play whomever they think is best suited for a position and who helps contribute to the team's development and success. Players who are not satisfied with their coach's decisions must engage the coach to identify the issue. Good communication is necessary between the coach and player. If a parent wants to discuss his/her displeasure with playing time then the following guidelines must be adhered to. These guidelines are designed to help athletes communicate their needs and goals and are essential to the MVA curriculum.

- The athlete must first approach the coach and initiate dialogue.
- If the question or problem is still unanswered or unresolved the athlete must again approach the coach for clarification and direction.
- If the question or problem is still unanswered or unresolved the athlete can request a player-coach meeting with parents and a club administrator in attendance.



## Tournaments

Most tournaments that MVA teams enter take one day, either a Saturday or a Sunday. The typical one-day tournament schedule starts at 8:00 AM with pool play consisting of three or four matches followed by bracket play in the afternoon. A few tournaments (Pacific Northwest Qualifier, Colorado Crossroads, Las Vegas Classic and Emerald City Classic) involve two days of pool play followed by single elimination bracket play.

### **Parent Guidelines:**

- We strongly recommend that players get a nutritious meal and have a 10:00PM curfew the night before a tournament.
- Parents are responsible for the transportation of their daughter to and from tournaments. MVA recommends that athletes do not drive themselves to and from tournaments. Car-pooling can be arranged with other teammates and is encouraged. Please be considerate and either arrange a ride exchange or contribute toward the cost of gas.
- Many gyms prohibit food or drink other than water in the court areas. Teams may be penalized by the tournament site director if parents or team supporters ignore this rule.

### **Player Rules:**

- If a player knows that she will miss a tournament, be late or have to leave early from a tournament it is her and her parent's responsibility to notify the coach as soon as a conflict is identified.
- All athletes are required to be in the gym, ready to warm-up, at the scheduled start time set up by their head coach. Usually this will be when the gym opens, one hour prior to the start of the first match.
- Players are expected to avoid displaying negative emotions during matches. Arguing with the officials, coaches or other participants will not be tolerated.
- All athletes are required to stay at the tournament until the team has been released by one of the coaches. We play as a team, and we will leave the event as a team.
- Players are to be responsible for their own water during the match. Parents may not approach the bench to refill or bring water after the match has started.
- Players must be responsible for their own equipment at tournaments. Players must carry their own bags.

### **Officiating:**

All USAV tournaments are at least partially self-officiated. Officiating at tournaments is the shared responsibility of the entire team, including coaches. All players are required to help with the line judging, scorekeeping, score flipping, and down officiating.

- The coach may rotate officiating responsibilities but will often only use the most experienced scorekeepers.
- No headsets or cell phones are to be used during officiating assignments. This also includes cell phones at the scorekeeper's table.

### **Team Area & Cooler:**

Upon arrival, the team will identify a team area where the girls can leave their bags and hang out between playing and officiating. The area may be a room, table or simply a spot in a hallway. Either way, the team area represents our club and should be kept neat and organized at all times. Most girls will bring some type of blanket and/or pillow, homework, a book, music or other items to help pass the time between matches. Remember, the team area is not secure and valuables should be left at your own risk. Also, be sure to properly dispose of any trash and leave the area as we found it when the tournament is over.





Most tournaments do not offer concessions. MVA team chaperones will organize a team picnic with items assigned for each player to bring to that tournament. The food will be kept in our team area and everyone associated with our team will be welcome to use the picnic area to socialize and eat for the duration of the day. We do ask that you let the players have first access to the items since they must coordinate meals and snacks with their playing and officiating schedule. Below is a simple food rotation that can be used to organize the team picnic amongst the team's families.

	Jan. 14	Jan. 28	Feb. 11	Mar. 3 or 4	Mar. 24	Apr. 28	May. 5	May. 19	Jun. 2 & 3
1 1/2 lb Turkey	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy
1 1/2 lb Ham	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor
1 1/2 lb Roast Beef	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn
2 lbs Cheese	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren
Lettuce & Tomato	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex
3 Dozen Rolls	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim	Krystal
Pasta Salad	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah	Kim
Bagels,	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina	Sarah
Green Salad	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia	Marina
Fresh Fruit	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo	Olivia
Veggies/Dip	Sarah	Kim	Krystal	Alex	Lauren	Eryn	Taylor	Katy	Jo Jo

## Travel

MVA's travel policy places the responsibility of most aspects of travel to tournaments and supervision of athletes on their parents. Parents are responsible for all costs for travel and meals for themselves as well as their daughter.

### Hotel Policies:

- Our policy is that players will stay with their parents when traveling requires the team to stay in a hotel. If a player will not have a parent at the tournament then the parent should make arrangements with another parent or guardian on the team to stay with that family. In no case will a player stay in a room by herself.
- While not a requirement, we prefer to have the team stay together in the same hotel if a family will be using a hotel. If that family has friends or other family in in that community they can stay with them if they desire to do so.
- All players are expected to be in their rooms and in bed at curfew. Unless a coach has designated a specific time, the default curfew will be 10:00 pm.
- Though your hotel is your temporary home, it is also the temporary home of many others. You must respect the needs of others by keeping your voice down throughout the hotel.
- Athletes may not leave the hotel area at any time without permission from their parent or the parent that they are staying with. Athletes should never be alone. Use the buddy system.
- An athlete found in breach of the USAV Code of Conduct (use of drugs/alcohol or possession of weapons) will be sent home immediately at the expense of the parent or guardian.
- An athlete who damages any property at a hotel or lodging will be personally responsible for damages.



### **Airline Policies:**

- For out of state trips that require air travel MVA's policy is the same for local or regional tournaments. Parents are responsible for their daughter's transportation to the event. The coach or director will provide dates and times for arrival and departure that families must follow while booking long distance transportation.

### **Chaperones:**

The chaperone position is required for all USAV teams and they are listed on the team roster. The chaperone are responsible for our players' behavior when the coaches are not present at the team cooler area. MVA does not task chaperones to be responsible for player travel to tournament sites or for player behavior while at hotels nor are chaperone travel expenses covered by the club. Chaperones can be used by the team's head coach in many facets over the course of a season. From helping to organize the team picnic area during single day tournaments to orchestrating team bonding activities during an out of state, multiday tournament. Chaperones should think of themselves as an off-the-court assistant for the team.

To be a great chaperone just remember...Go MVA!

**G**irls Girls Girls! The club season is a really fun experience especially with a unified, motivated team. Help your team bond by organizing team activities including dinners at tournaments and fun events such as park pot-lucks, parents vs. girls volleyball, sleepovers etc. You can inspire your team by giving them gift bags filled with gum, hair ponies with v.b. ribbons, chapsticks, lotions, v.b. bag tags, team socks etc. Lift spirits with encouraging notes or positive pep talks. Lastly, lead the parents in loudly cheering for your team.

**O**versee Food. Most tournaments allow food so parents provide a food table for the girls, their families and coaches. Encourage healthy food during tournament play. Make sure you have a table and something for garbage. Create a food sign up for parents.

Example:

- Entrées – 2 families work together to bring soups, mac n cheese, taco salad, pasta salad etc.
- Sandwiches – 2 families work together to have ready-made or sandwich fixings
- Vegetable Tray
- Fresh Fruit Tray
- Healthy snacks – 2 families bring a variety of protein bars, popcorn, cheese sticks, yogurt, nuts etc.
- Paper goods and yummy treat to eat after tournament is over

**M**onitor Team – Help the coaches and maintain safety by keeping track of where the girls are at all times and making sure they are where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there. Make sure no families are missing out on watching their girls play. Be prepared with band aids, pain relief, making sure the girls have water, etc.

**V**ocalize Information – Communicate with the director, coaches, parents and girls. Make sure club and coaches information is getting to parents. Create team group message for communicating and answering questions. Especially new families need to know what to expect. Make sure they know when to bring stadium chairs vs. camping chairs. Help them understand the tournament schedule, refing, and brackets. Make sure they know what court you are on and what time we play. Provide lodging and eating suggestions, etc.



**A**ppreciate Coaches – Ask the coaches how you can assist them. End the season by thanking your coaches for all that they do. Have the girls sign a thank you card and give parents the opportunity to contribute to a gift. For example, team pictures framed or girls names on shirt, gift cards etc.

## Team Fees & Billing

### Team Fee:

Team fees vary within the club and compared to other clubs based on how much your team practices and the tournament schedule that the club selects. Your daughter's team fee includes:

- Admin Fee – covers registration for staff, equipment, website, tax preparation, etc.
- Coaching Fee – covers coaching stipends for head and assistant coaches.
- Gym Fee – covers costs for practice gyms.
- Travel – covers hotel, mileage and meal per diem for coaching staff (not for players).
- Uniform – covers jerseys, t-shirts and warm-ups for players.
- Equipment – covers balls, nets and other equipment replacements or maintenance needs.

Your daughter's team fee does not include the following expenses:

- Any travel expenses or meals for players.
- Team cooler expenses
- USAV and AAU membership for players.
- Apparel or accessories such as spandex, kneepads, shoes, socks or gym bags/backpacks.

### Billing and Payment Policies:

- Responsible Party - The parent or guardian who signs the participation agreement and the USAV Letter of Intent is liable for any and all fees, dues, and charges for goods and services incurred by the participant. By signing the agreement, the responsible party accepts liability and agrees to be bound by the terms of the agreement. The agreements for all sibling participants, regardless of which parent or guardian signs as the responsible party, will be treated as one account for the purposes of this liability.
- Returned Item Fees - In the event a check or credit card draft used to pay fees is returned to MVA or refused for payment regardless of the reason for refusal, a \$30.00 service fee will be assessed to the participant's account.
- Refunds – If the participant becomes so severely injured while playing or practicing with the club that she cannot practice or compete for more than 2 months then a refund will be given. The responsible party will still be required to pay all incurred costs prior to injury to include USAV membership and uniforms. The club will return any unused portion of prepaid fees to the responsible party within 10 business days.
- Statements - Participants will receive written statements of amounts payable for fees and services used by the participant. Accounts may be paid by credit card in person or online or paid by check, money order or certified funds.
- Payments – Credit card payments may be made online at [www.gomva.com](http://www.gomva.com) or with Nate Michael. Checks should be made out to Montana Volleyball Academy or MVA. Please write the players name in the memo line on any checks. Under no circumstances should payments be given to coaches. Cash should never be mailed. Payments should be mailed to the club post office box.



Montana Volleyball Academy  
PO Box 5839  
Missoula, Mont.  
59806

- Payment Schedules:
  - Payment schedules and payment contracts will be presented during the initial team meeting.
- Payment Plan – If an extended monthly payment plan is necessary for your family please contact the Director to make arrangements.
- Delinquent Payments – A player who is delinquent with payments will not be placed on the tournament roster. Players not on the tournament roster are not able to play and may not sit on the bench during tournaments. Accounts that remain unpaid after June 1, 2015 will be considered “Not in Good Standing” and reported to the Evergreen Region office of USAV which may affect a players participation during the subsequent club season. Accounts that are more than 90 days past due will be reported to collections.

## Fundraising

Club volleyball has expenses that are related to team fees as well as the travel-associated costs that come with participation with our older age group teams. We are committed to the goal that no deserving athlete will be prevented from being in the club for lack of funds.

MVA sponsors three fundraisers during the competitive season. Athletes that wish to participate can earn money that will go directly to pay teams dues. MVA will conduct its first fundraiser during the holiday season before the season starts and two more fundraisers during the season. Participation in these fundraisers is encouraged but voluntary.

## Communication

### **Routine Team Communication**

The primary way that you will receive communication from your coach or the club director will be through email. If a last minute change occurs with a practice or with a tournament we will try to text out that information or call parents directly. Billing information will be sent by email. It is critical that you provide the club with all email addresses where you want information sent as well as cell phone numbers for both parents and the player. If changes occur, please update the club director.

### **Website**

Our website [www.gomva.com](http://www.gomva.com) has a lot of information and resources for parents or players. The website will keep an updated calendar of all events including practices, clinics and tournaments. All changes will be updated promptly to make the GoMVA.com the most reliable source of information regarding your team. Parents will be asked to sign a release to post player names, pictures or recruiting information on the website. A player's home address or other contact information will never be posted on the website.



## **Social Media & Facebook**

MVA has a Facebook page and we encourage you to like us. MVA will use its Facebook page to update you on upcoming events and post tournament results. MVA has blocked all posts not made by the administrator.

## **Player to Coach**

Both players and coaches are responsible for establishing a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Bringing up a problem can be very difficult for a player but this is one of those life skills that sports can teach. Parents may need to push their daughter to take the first step though. Our coaches work to be approachable and to create a safe environment for player to bring up concerns.

For players, the most common concern that they have revolves around playing time. Our expectation is that the player should start this conversation by asking what she needs to do to play more and how she can work towards playing a larger role in contributing to the team's success. Often times, players are unclear on what they need to change or how playing time is determined and an early conversation can address these questions.

## **Player to Player**

It is our expectation that if a conflict arises between players on a team then it gets resolved outside of practice/tournaments time, if possible, so as to minimize the affect that it can have on the chemistry of the team. It is important for players to realize that they do not have to like everyone on the team or be friends with them but they can still respect their contribution to the team. If the conflict is not reconcilable then it is our expectation that the players involved should not aggravate the problem by involving other players or parents on the team with gossip, rumors or attacking people on Facebook or other social media.

## **Parents to Administration**

- MVA wants to encourage appropriate communication between our parents and the coaching staff of their daughter's team. What is appropriate communication? Who should I communicate to, the coach or the director? Any information about your daughter's health. Recent illnesses, medical restrictions relative to practice, allergies, medication needs are all examples of important information that we want you to communicate to your coaches and/or MVA administration.
- Any information about your daughter's emotional health. It may be important for your coach to know if your daughter is struggling in school or had a recent death in the family or is dealing with another emotionally charged issue. Without this context, your daughter's behavior in practice or during a tournament may be interpreted as being lazy, unfocused or disrespectful.
- A quick heads up that your daughter is struggling to talk with the coaches. This is appropriate if it is only a head's up and not a detailed email. Remember that we to begin this conversation with the player first. This should be communicated to the director first so that an extra pair of eyes can be alerted to the team. The director will communicate your concerns to the coach.
- Your positive experiences with the coach or the team. If we are doing things right then reinforce that by letting us know.
- Your willingness to become more involved. If you want to help with pictures, video, fundraising or other activities to support your team and the club then let us know!

There are topics of communication with your daughter's coaches which are not appropriate or where there is a more appropriate venue to make that communication.

- Conversations about play time. If your daughter is receiving playing time consistent with this handbook and the expectations set forth by your coach at the player/parent meeting at the beginning of the season



and your daughter has not tried to discuss her playing time or her role on the team with her coach, it is inappropriate for you to do so. Before approaching the coach yourself, encourage your daughter to talk to her coach about what she can do to help the team and earn more court time or ask the coach to more clearly define her role on the team. If after this conversation, there are still concerns a conversation with the coach, parent, and player may be appropriate. Request a meeting with the director to facilitate this process.

- Other players on the team. Your personal opinions of other player's attitudes, skill, performance, or conduct are not appropriate topics of conversation for you to have with your daughter's coach. There are some exceptions with regards to the code of conduct. A team chaperone should inform the coaches of any issues that arise on the team relative to tournament rules or club travel policies. Any issues relative to drugs, alcohol or weapons should be brought up with MVA administration immediately. Please use your best judgment here, and understand that if you cross a line, the coach/director will let you know immediately that this is an inappropriate topic of conversation.
- Coaching technique, tactics, systems, etc. These are all issues that are not open for discussion or negotiation. There are opportunities with end of season parent evaluations to provide feedback on these topics to the coaching staff and the club director.
- Poor Sportsmanship. The club director will not tolerate aggressive parent behavior toward any of coaches, coaches of other clubs, parents, or officials. If a parent exhibits this type of behavior, they will be appropriately sanctioned, which may include being asked to not attend tournaments in the future or even dismissal from MVA.

### **Finding the Best Time to Talk**

In looking for a good outcome to any meeting with MVA administration it is important to find the best time and setting for the conversation to occur. Here are some guidelines for finding the best time to talk.

- Little problems are easier to fix than big ones and little problems have a way of getting bigger when not addressed. If there is a question about what a player needs to do to play more, don't wait for half the season to begin the conversation.
- Don't ask to meet during practice or during a tournament. Your coach will not meet with you at this time. Before or after practice is usually the best time. Please allow plenty of time for the meeting.
- The 24-hour rule is a good rule because it works! If there is any emotion to an issue then wait at least 24 hours after the issue before having a meeting.
- Provide a little prep for your coach but not too much before the meeting. Let your coach know why you want to meet but don't send a lengthy email. Emails or long phone messages tend to be too emotional and accusatory. Avoid that with just a brief note or conversation.

## **Grievance Procedures**

None of the coaches should be considered unapproachable. They are all very willing to listen to a player's concern and try to arrive at a mutual solution. Until the coach is made aware of the concern nothing at all can be done to alleviate it. We think the ability to confront and discuss potentially emotional topics is an absolutely necessary skill for negotiating conflict within one's life. However, we also realize there are times a problem needs to be addressed and the player cannot bring herself to approach the coach. In this case, we HIGHLY encourage the parents, in a spirit of collaboration with the coach, to produce the best environment for the player, to bring the issue to the Club Director's attention. Please do not let problems fester – it only makes things worse for everyone in trying to resolve issues.



If you, as a parent, have legitimate concerns about a coach other than your athlete's coach, or with an athlete other than your own, you need to address the Club Director.

**Procedure Steps:**

Specifically, if you as a parent, or your athlete as a participant on a MVA team, have concerns about MVA policies or actions, the procedures to follow are, in this order:

1. The athlete should talk to the coach about the matter.
  - a. It is understood at the younger ages (u12) sometimes the parent will be the first contact with the coach.
  - b. If the matter remains unresolved, or if the athlete has reasonable concern that talking to the coach will not resolve the matter, then;
2. The parent should talk to the Club Director.
  - a. Parents and/or athletes should call the director on the phone or email to schedule a meeting.
  - b. Meetings need to be at times and locations other than tournament. If a parent approaches a coach during a tournament, we have instructed our coaches to refuse to discuss any controversial matter, to refer the parent to the Club Director, and to walk away from the parent.
  - c. We ask that any meetings be before the next practice or tournament of your particular team.
  - d. The Club Director will meet with the coach to address the issue.
  - e. If the matter still remains unresolved, or if the parent has reasonable concern that talking to the coach will not resolve the matter, then;
3. The parent should talk to the Club Director and request a meeting with the coach, the Club Director and the Parent Representative.
4. If the parent or the athlete is not satisfied by the action taken by the Club Director, they may request a release from MVA to play elsewhere.

We encourage parents to approach us earlier rather than later about concerns they have. There is little we can do to rectify a situation that is not brought to our attention until the end of the season. It is much better to have open lines of communication about problems as soon as they arise.

**Other Grievance Policies:**

MVA will not tolerate any hostile, aggressive confrontation between a parent and any official, any other parent, any athlete or any coach, regardless of whether the coach, athlete or other parent is a member of MVA or not. Violation of this policy may result in the athlete being dismissed from MVA.

It is inappropriate and undesirable for an athlete or a parent to approach other MVA parents and athletes to complain about a problem the athlete or parent has with a MVA coach, about objections to coaching decisions, or about disagreement with an administrative decision. This is one of the biggest factors in disrupting the chemistry of a team.

Asking uninvolved persons to take sides on an issue is unfair to the third parties, to the team and to the club. Competitive team athletics, by its very nature, creates situations where everyone may not be happy all the time. For the psychological health of the athletes and the club as a whole, grievances need to be handled between the parties involved and the decision-makers in the situation, meaning, talk to the coach or talk to the administration.

We strongly encourage any member who is approached and asked to listen to or express an opinion about



matters between two other parties in the Club to suggest to the complaining party that he or she needs take the matter up with the coach in question, or the Club Director, and refuse to listen further.

It is detrimental to all persons involved to repeat complaints you hear (or overhear) to other uninvolved parties. By the time a story gets to the third or fourth party, it frequently bears little resemblance to the facts of the situation.

## Sexual or Physical Abuse Policy

MVA recognizes that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment with athletes are illegal and unethical, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Sexual abuse and harassment is defined as, but not limited to, repeated comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature. This includes demanding sexual favors in exchange for promotions, unwelcome touching of any kind, unwanted letters, telephone calls, texts or email of a personal nature, unwarranted inquiries about personal life or sexual habits, repeated jokes with sexual content, and sexual comments about a person's appearance or body.

In addition, MVA will not tolerate hazing. Hazing is defined as any intentional act that endangers the mental or physical health of one person or a group of people, by another person or group of people, for the purpose of group acceptance or membership. Hazing behavior would include but is not limited to: brutality such as beating or striking, excess calisthenics, excessive consumption of food or drink, or intimidating/threatening activities that cause extreme mental stress.

MVA will not tolerate sexual or physical abuse of any of its staff or of participants. MVA regards the safety of the young athletes entrusted to our care and instruction as our highest priority. We do not tolerate physical behavior that compromises that priority. We monitor activities and interactions to try to prevent miscommunications that cause discomfort to any of our athletes or parents.

### **Reporting Complaints**

If you see or experience behaviors by a MVA coach, board member or chaperone that you believe to be inappropriate, report it immediately to the Club Director. All facts will be written down and a file will be started. All complaints will be investigated. Any employee or volunteer found to be in violation of the sexual and physical abuse policy will be subject to discipline, which may include dismissal. There will be no retaliation against any complainants or witnesses who participate in an investigation of an abuse charge.