

# *NET FORCE*

VOLLEYBALL CLUB



2017 HANDBOOK

# INTRODUCTION

Since 1994 Net Force Volleyball Club has been committed to training and developing student athletes through competitive participation in the sport of volleyball.

Net Force Volleyball Club is a proud member of USA Volleyball (USAV), Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the Great Lakes Region Volleyball Association.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize both parents and players with Net Force Volleyball Club, and to create expectations for the Net Force experience. In order for our program to be successful, the policies and rules of this handbook must be followed and will be enforced. These policies along with our Players', Coaches' and Parents' Code of Conduct lay the foundation for success and player growth.

It is our sincere hope that this handbook will answer many of the questions that you may have about our organization as well as provide you with insight to what it takes to become successful in our program. If you have additional questions or concerns that are not addressed here, please contact our Program Director for clarification. Welcome to Net Force Volleyball Club.



# *NET FORCE*

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VOLLEYBALL CLUB

## NET FORCE VOLLEYBALL CLUB MISSION STATEMENT:

*To create a teaching environment where athletes have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to excel and compete at the interscholastic, regional, national and/or collegiate level as well as developing lifelong character traits of self discipline, responsibility, integrity and citizenship.*

## CLUB VISION AND GOALS:

- To teach volleyball and promote positive attitudes, life choices and friendships.
- To challenge and support our athletes to strive for their own unique goals and greatness.
- To contribute to the total development of our players, on and off the court.
- To develop partnerships with parents and families to help enrich our athletes lives and establish a productive sport/life balance.
- To promote the community of volleyball through fair play, passionate players, fans and coaches and fierce competition.
- To use innovation, creativity and evidence based practices in our training of athletes, parents and coaches.
- To be enthusiastic and professional in our approach to teaching and coaching.
- To provide guidance and collegiate recruitment opportunities that will allow athletes to continue their playing careers at colleges or universities.
- To have fun!

## TEAM SELECTION AND PLACEMENT:

Teams will be comprised of selected athletes who are willing and able to contribute and subscribe to the rules, philosophies and goals of each team. Tryouts are conducted annually and are a "necessary evil" due to limited resources of gym time and coaches. Players are evaluated by the entire Net Force Coaching staff on their athleticism, talent, character and team play in 1 or 2 day sessions. Our staff is very sensitive to the disappointment of those not chosen and attempt to go about this process in a most sensitive and supportive manner. While we recognize the stress of such a try out, we acknowledge this as part of athletic competition and experience.

Our goal isn't to exclusively train athletes for just one season but to hopefully build a continuum of training with our teams over multiple seasons. On occasion, an athlete may be reassigned to a team during the course of the season. The club reserves the right to make such changes but does so in careful consultation with the athlete and parents. Such moves may require additional fee adjustments which will be passed on to the involved family for payment.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT:

We recognize that there are a number of important lessons that come from playing team sports. The ability to recognize that hard work and commitment are cornerstones to achieving goals is vital to an athlete's development. These concepts will be stressed throughout the season. A desire to win is a significant motivating force behind hard work. We believe in winning and having an enjoyable experience but these are recognized as by-products of the immediate goal of hard work. We focus on creating an environment where hard work, fun and winning can take place. Throughout the season the expectation is that our staff foster an environment where athletes grow their understanding of the game, how to thrive in competitive, stressful scenarios and have the necessary competitive exposure to be successful in athletics and life.

To facilitate player growth and success, Net Force offers both National (**Competition**) and Regional (**Select**) level programs. These levels are designed to take into consideration a player's skill level and the player (and parents) financial and time commitments. The cost

of these programs varies and is based on the amount of training (practices), length of season, and the number of entered events.

During the course of try-outs a player may declare their desire to play only regionally. Net Force Volleyball Club reserves the right to encourage all athletes to participate in the level that in their professional judgment is most suitable for their athletic abilities and potential.

## TEAM STRUCTURE:

**Competition** level teams are our national level program. Teams at this level will travel to a minimum of (2) travel events including: a National Qualifier and season ending National tournament. Additional fees have been assessed to cover lodging and coach's fees for these events. Travel events are considered "Major Tournament Events" and are considered mandatory. See Tournament Information for additional details. Competition level teams will be comprised of 10-11 players per team.

These teams practice twice weekly during 2 hour long sessions. Teams will take a week-long break from training for the Christmas Holiday and Spring Break. Commitment level for Competition teams is high. Teams will compete in tournament and league play at a minimum of twice per month.

**Select** level teams are our regional level programs. These teams practice twice weekly and compete at tournaments and league play a minimum of twice per month. Teams will be given similar breaks for Christmas Holiday and Spring Break. Select level teams will be comprised of 10-11 players with our youngest level (12 y/o) having 12.

## LENGTH OF SEASON:

Select level teams will begin practices the first week of December. Tournament play will begin the first week of January. The season will conclude mid April for all Select teams.

Competition level teams will begin practices the first week of December. Tournament play will begin the first week of January and the season will conclude at the end of June.

## COACHING AND PLAYING TIME PHILOSOPHY:

Our philosophy involves the belief that practices are the time to improve skills and develop technique. Over 80% of each athlete's club experience occurs in practice sessions. The remaining 20% of club time happens in the tournament context. This highlights the importance of our practice sessions and is cornerstone to our playing time philosophy; "Playing time is earned, not given, through hard work, positive attitude and display of skills on the practice court". Attending all possible practice sessions is the #1 most impactful way of maximizing tournament playing time opportunities.

The reality is that equal playing time is not a possible outcome during tournament play. While every player will get opportunities to play at every tournament, the specific amount of playing time is at the coach's discretion and will not be equal for all players. Players earn playing time through game situations and practice. Every player will get the same opportunities in practice to earn playing time. Players that are absent from practice (whether excused or unexcused) will miss out on opportunities to earn playing time. It is responsibility of the coach to identify the strongest line-up and implement a strategy that puts the team in the best position to be successful. Rarely will the coach sacrifice an opportunity to win in order to "give someone playing time." If a player does not, for whatever reason fulfill their obligations on the court, it is the coach's right to substitute them so that the team may achieve its goals. Our coaches will not be required to explain or rationalize game time decisions regarding athletes and it is considered inappropriate to be approaching a coach to do so.

Some players may get specialized playing assignment, playing front or back row only. It is important that players and parents understand the game and the utilization of such players skills. While this specialization does impact playing time, it also allows a team to function at a higher level and be more competitive and successful.

If that during the course of the season, it is the athlete's belief (not the parent's) that they are not being treated fairly in terms of playing an appropriate amount she should discuss this with her coach first and foremost. Teaching athletes how to express themselves during times of concern and disagreement is a significant part of our training and player development. With this

in mind the following guidelines have been developed to assist players and parents in conflict resolution:

- The player should discuss the concern or issue with the coach directly in an effort to arrive at a solution. No coach should be considered unapproachable. We require that our coaches listen to all player concerns and work towards resolution. Until a coach is made aware of a concern, nothing can be done to resolve it. The timing and setting of such discussions is critical. Avoiding times of high emotion such as during a match or tournament should be avoided.
- If the concern is not resolved the player and parent may make an appointment to speak with the coach. Please do not approach a coach at a tournament or practice where emotions are undoubtedly high and conversations may be possibly overheard by others.
- If a solution cannot be reached the player or parent should contact the clubs' directors to set up a meeting to further discuss the issue. The club director reserves the right to act as the final say in such instances where no mutual resolution can be made.

Our approach to resolving player dissatisfaction works if everyone follows these guidelines. We encourage player communication with their coaches (suitably supported by players 11-12 year olds). We require our coaches to be approachable. At no time should a coach be approached during an event and no parent should come onto to court for any reason during competition.

Our final request concerning parent communication involves timing. Oftentimes comments and feedback is offered during times of high stress and emotionality. We therefore request that parents delay all such conversation for at least 24 hours before making such contact. Whether by phone, email or text it is best to delay such discussions.

It is our hope that the parents will work with the coach in teaching their children how to manage the ups and downs of working within a group. Athletics can provide a positive tool in teaching our children the realities of life. Along the way, they will encounter and achieve life skills relevant to; cooperation, making use of positive feedback and constructive criticism, the value of being flexible, and the importance of handling defeat and victory in a gracious manner.

## PLAYER SAFETY & COACHING BOUNDARIES:

Net Force Volleyball Club is committed to keeping all players and coaches safe and free of unnecessary risk exposure. All Net Force coaches must undergo background checks from USA Volleyball and Net Force administration prior to becoming registered members with USA Volleyball, the Great Lakes Region and Net Force Volleyball Club. In assuming these responsibilities, each coach is held to a strict professional code of ethics and conduct. Prior to assuming responsibilities as a Net Force Coach, each individual must successfully complete and pass a USA Volleyball IMPACT Certification seminar and exam in addition to regular USA Volleyball background checks.

*If at any time you feel the ethics or safety of your child is in question, please contact club director Mike Falk at 224-430-4581 immediately to discuss.  
The safety of our athletes is primary and requires our immediate attention.*

## TRAINING PHILOSOPHY:

Our approach to practice and training sessions involves several different techniques and approaches.

**Instruction** involves the teaching of skills, techniques, strategies and methods. We require our coaches teach the game "the right way". This involves the technical skills as well as sportsmanship and character aspects of the sport.

**Repetition** is a key component of our training regiment and helps to ingrain and reinforce mastery of skills. Getting quality "touches" each and every practice is a significant goal for all team practices.

**Feedback** is provided at every training session. This helps reinforce mastery as well as correct inconsistencies and errors. Players must be open to feedback. We expect our players to be open to the feedback of all Net Force coaches that they interact with regardless of their team assignment. Players will undoubtedly be asked to try different techniques that may be new or uncomfortable to them. Trying new techniques and approaches is part of being "teachable".

**Competition** will occur daily in our practice sessions and is also a significant part of our training philosophy. This takes place on many different levels from intra-team play and contests,

inter-team scrimmages and eventually weekend tournament competition.

Volleyball is a sport that places a large number of demands on the technical and physical skills of a player. Our training techniques are based in our extensive experience developing young athletes into high performers on the court and in the community. Some parents enjoy the opportunity to watch, listen and learn at practice sessions. Parents are welcome at practice sessions but must avoid team/player interaction in order to decrease the chances for distractions. There may be times when for numerous reasons, a coach may choose to hold a closed practice. In the event that practices are closed to parents we will issue a notice on our website. Player friends are not permitted to view any practice session.

## **ADDITIONAL PRACTICE RULES:**

Practices will start on time. Practice equipment will be set up 15 minutes prior to the start of practice.

Every player, team and coach will leave the practice facility in better shape than you find it. Facility usage is a short commodity and vital to a successful our club program. Please do not underestimate the effort and time involved in acquiring a facility. Net Force Volleyball Club is committed to keeping its reputation as a responsible lessee.

Players are required to be "ready" to begin practice at the assigned time. Please allow time to change shoes, fix hair and put on kneepads before the designated start time.

Cell phones are not to be used during practice sessions. Phones should be stored away in player bags until the conclusion of the practice.

Players are required to wear assigned practice uniforms to all practices. No uniform...no practice. Players; not parents are responsible for their uniforms.

Abusive language (cursing or swearing) is not tolerated in the program.

Player use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco will not be tolerated and will be dealt with consequences.

At the conclusion of all practices, players will be escorted to the front of the Field House and

monitored by coaches until released to their parents or secure in their own vehicles. Parents are requested to be timely in picking up their daughters so not to unnecessarily delay our staff.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Participation in club volleyball requires considerable commitment in terms of time, emotion and resources. It also requires that players and family members make frequent sacrifices. Lastly, participation in high level competitive athletics requires time management - a skill set that we will be requiring all our athletes to develop and practice during the course of the season. In order for our athletes and teams to develop and compete at the highest levels possible the following policies have been developed regarding attendance at practice sessions and tournament competition.

Practices are mandatory and player attendance is expected.

Practice attendance will be a significant factor in determining a players' role on a team.

All Net Force coaches are required to keep a written attendance log to document player absences.

### Absences for the following reasons will be consider "excused":

- Family Emergency
- Illness/Injury (See Injury Section)
- School Sport/Activity
- College/School Entrance exam
- Religious Education/Worship

### The following are examples of "unexcused" absences:

- Family Vacations
- Job Search/Training
- Job Schedule Conflict
- Any absence reported to coaching staff less than 1 hour prior to the start of practice.

A significant element of our teaching involves training our athletes to manage their time and achieve balance in their busy lives. Our program acknowledges the significance of academics and understands the demands that most of our student/athletes are subjected to. The skills we attempt to teach involve planning, time management and goal setting. We expect that players will not miss practices due to a lack of foresight. Family and Social engagements frequently conflict with the club season. Involvement with our program is not convenient. All our athletes, coaches

and families will be called upon frequently, to sacrifice personal and family plans for the common interest of the team. Personal sacrifice is only a portion of the price required of participation in high level athletics that Net Force pursues.

### **MAKE UP PRACTICES:**

Player development and growth only occurs when players are fully engaged in practices. To allow players to maintain a regular training regiment, coaches may request that players "make up" missed practices (excused and unexcused). Refusal or failure to comply with such requests could lead to the loss of playing time.

### **REPORTING ABSENCES:**

Absences must be reported at least 1 hour prior to the start of a practice session. Coaches should be notified 1 week in advance of any absences from a scheduled tournament. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. To promote self responsibility and accountability we ask that players (not parents) contact their coach to report absences. Each coach will make available their contact information and will set parameters for notification (email, phone call, text).

## **MULTI-SPORT ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION:**

Net Force Volleyball Club welcomes multi-sport athletes and works to develop schedules and policies that are amenable to those with additional athletic commitments. With the decision to participate in multiple sports come the added responsibilities of time management and priority setting. Multi sport athletes are required to provide their coach with a practice and competition schedule prior to the start of the season. This will allow coaches to possibly make plans that are inclusive of those participating in other sports. Athletes who are involved in other sports (or school activities) will not be discipline for excused absences. However, multiple absences, for any reason, any result in other team members progressing and developing at a faster pace within the team and this could affect playing time through competition at their position.

# TOURNAMENT INFORMATION:

Considerable time and resources are allocated to the development of our club tournament schedule. In general, teams will complete in day-long tournaments on weekends. These events usually begin at 8:00am and can conclude as late as 5:00pm. Players are asked to arrive no later than 45 minutes prior to the start of their first match and cannot leave the event until all play and officiating duties have been concluded. Leaving an event for any reason without informing the team coach is unacceptable and an unsafe practice. This will not be tolerated.

Team schedules are posted on our website on or before December 1 of the season. Likewise directions to playing sites are located on our website. Net Force Volleyball Club is a supporting member of the *Windy City Power League (WCPL)* with these league dates comprising a majority of the season's schedule. Playing sites for WCPL and other 1-day events are within 90 minutes of the Lake County area. Select level teams will only play in local (Regional) events. Individual tournament information (start times, location, etc.) may not be available until the Wednesday or Thursday prior to the weekend. This information comes directly from the hosting clubs and their tournament directors and we have no control of the timeliness. Information will be released as soon as we receive it on our website.

Competition level teams will participate in several **Major Tournament Events** throughout the course of the season. Some of these events may require overnight stays. Plans for such trips and travel will be outlined and explained as the schedule is presented. The significance of 100% attendance at these Major Tournament Events is vital and we request full cooperation and planning from all team members and families to ensure our success at these events. Therefore, we ask that you schedule your events around these identified tournaments. In general, all "Major Events" should hold priority over other sports, activities and family events and vacations. Such events include our participation in Presidents' Day Festivals, National Qualifiers and season ending National Championship events.

We believe that there are many benefits of our aggressive travel schedule. Such travel is useful in teaching athletes the traits of self-responsibility, time management and stress management. It is also our belief that it provides our teams a more competitive experience, facing teams from across the nation. Athletes are also exposed to considerably more collegiate coaches at such National events increasing their opportunities for college recruitment and scholarship.

# ADDITIONAL TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES:

We ask that players refrain from spending excessive time with family, friends or boyfriends during a tournament. We ask that our teams' stay together for the duration of the event and that includes time between matches and during officiating responsibilities. Players are encouraged to support other Net Force teams when schedules allow and get food and drink in their time between matches.

Use of cell phones/tablets for any other purpose besides making important or emergency calls is frowned upon and could result in disciplinary action. If players are using the phones to listen to music or take photos of their team during an event, common sense will prevail. However, if players are using their phones excessively and excluding themselves from team activities, the coach has the right to terminate all use of cell phones or tablets during an event.

Players are not allowed to leave the playing facility until released by their coach for the day. This includes staying through team officiating responsibilities until the match is over or any post match meeting that the coach may hold.

Players are not allowed to leave the playing facility at any time during the tournament. Approaching any member of the Net Force coaching staff at a competition with questions regarding playing time, game tactics or strategy or player position is not appropriate. Texting, emailing or any other form of electronic communication directed to our staff during the course of a tournament is unacceptable. As employees of Net Force Volleyball Club we have instructed our staff to "walk away" from such encounters to avoid possible escalation. Furthermore, our staff has been instructed to report any instances of confrontation that occurs at an event.

Club directors will address such policy violations and issue warnings only once before issuing sanctions.

We ask that parents are both supportive and positive in regards to the team and the athletes at all times. Please refrain from directing negative comments at the officiating crew, coaches and/or players. Net Force is proud of our reputation and character and we realize that our parents are as important to that reputation as our players and coaching staff. Please represent our club and your daughters in a manner that we can all be proud of.

## TEAM TRAVEL:

All players and their families will be responsible for their transportation to all tournaments, local and out of state, unless explicitly notified to the contrary. This includes transportation from the hotel to the playing venue(s). Car pooling is strongly suggested. Net Force coaches are unable to transport players in their own vehicles.

Competition level teams will participate in at least 2 overnight events. Additional fees have been assessed to cover lodging and coach's fees for these events. Failure to attend such travel tournaments will not entitle members to refunds.

Considerable time and resources are dedicated to the planning and scheduling of these events. We take great pride in providing our players, teams and families with the most organized, competitive and safe travel tournaments. Players, families and coaches will receive regular communications regarding these tournaments and team itinerary.

## INJURY REPORTING/ TREATMENT:

During the course of our highly intense and competitive season player injuries do occur. All coaches are required to have with them at all practices and competitions signed Player Medical Release forms that provide us with family permission to treat injuries. An incident/accident report form will also be completed by the team coach which will be reviewed by the club director and forwarded to the Great Lakes Region office for processing.

Players that are injured are responsible for their own recovery and will be required to communicate regularly with their coach regarding their recovery progress. Injured players are still required to attend practice sessions once their injury has been stabilized. Attending practices allows for continued learning as well as demonstrating support for other team members.

## CLUB COMMUNICATION:

Net Force Volleyball club relies primarily on electronic forms of communication in interacting with players and family members. Rarely will paper documents be distributed with information. The following formats are utilized by our club to disseminate information and announce changes in protocols or plans:

The **Net Force Volleyball Club website** ([netforcevolleyball.com](http://netforcevolleyball.com)) is the primary source for information including;

- Monthly practice and competition schedules for all teams
- Directions to tournament sites
- Weather related cancellations
- Travel itineraries and directions
- Team rosters and pictures
- Links to additional resources and information

Players and parents are encouraged to check this page frequently for updates.

The Net Force Facebook page is an additional source of information and provides updates, links to additional information, articles and fun facts about our club and players. Like us on Facebook today!

## FINANCIAL/FEE STRUCTURE:

The designated fees cover the following expenses: gym rental, USA and AAU fees and dues, uniforms, tournament fees, coaches' salaries, administration fees, equipment, medical supplies, postage, office supplies, coaching certification and training, and insurance. The listed price is an all inclusive price. There are no additional travel charges or uniform fees to pay. Players ordering additional team sportswear incur additional charges.

**Net Force Competition 2,800.00**

**Net Force Select 990.00**

<b>DATE DUE</b>	<b>PAYMENT PURPOSE</b>	<b>AMOUNT DUE</b>
11/21/2016	Comp Team Dues #1 Select Team Dues #1	1,000.00 500.00
1/4/2017	Comp Team Dues #2 Select Team Dues #2	1,000.00 240.00
3/1/2017	Comp Team Dues #3	550.00

A \$250.00 non-refundable deposit is due upon completion of tryouts. This deposit will secure a players' position with the club.

Additional extended payment plans are available upon request and should be developed in coordination with our club director prior to the start of the season.

There is a 30.00 charge for any check returned for insufficient funding.

## **REFUND POLICY:**

Refunds may be provided at the sole discretion of the Club. Such instances are extremely rare. Team budgets are calculated assuming full payment of dues by all participants. Players and parents are asked to refer to the Net Force Volleyball Club Memorandum and Understanding of Agreement for terms and conditions of refunds.

# GREAT LAKES REGION PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Great Lakes Region Volleyball Association acts as the governing body for all USA Volleyball activities within our established region. In doing so the Region works to provide players and families with the most current information regarding the sport of volleyball and related competition. They have established a list of Parent/Guardian Responsibilities which should be reviewed by all participants.

The [Great Lakes Region Website](#) is an excellent source of information for all volleyball related information. [Great Lakes Region Home Page](#)

## OUR LEGACY

For the past two decades Net Force teams have earned the reputation of being competitive, well-organized, well-trained and good citizens. We have been able to achieve this by dedicating ourselves and our training and to these values and philosophical beliefs. This system and philosophy have allowed Net Force Volleyball Club to reach great levels of success at both the regional and national levels. We look forward to partnering with you for another exciting season of club volleyball.