

Northwest Juniors Volleyball Club  
**2018 PARENT HANDBOOK**

**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Northwest Juniors Volleyball Club. We are one of the many clubs in the New England Region (NERVA) of USA Volleyball. This handbook has been created to help our parents and players better understand what club volleyball is all about. Club Volleyball is a commitment from all parties. It begins with you as the parent to your child to the coaches and the club director(s). Everyone needs to be involved in order to have a successful club season. Northwest Juniors is a program of the Northwestern CT YMCA. It is required that ALL PARENTS or GUARDIANS read this publication in its entirety before participating in our program.

**ABOUT US**

Northwest Juniors is a volleyball program devoted to the development of volleyball skills in girls through three levels: Developmental, Club and Select programs.

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If you email, please identify who you are and who your child is. Thank you.

**OUR GOALS**

Northwest Juniors prides itself on being recognized as a program that offers a quality volleyball experience for each player. Our goal is to teach our athletes to excel on and off the court by developing skills and promoting team unity.

We do this by and providing:

- Quality training that enhances and develops the skills of our participants.
- Competitive teams that pursue performance, leadership and sportsmanship.
- Develop a love for the sport of volleyball through a positive team experience.
- Encourage and help our players pursue higher education.
- Provide and train quality coaches to be teachers of the game in a competitive and positive environment.

**WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN EXPECT FROM PLAYING FOR NORTHWEST JUNIORS**

At a minimal level, club volleyball provides the opportunity to learn and improve volleyball skills through hours of additional practice and competition. Club volleyball gives players the opportunity to enhance athletic, social and leadership skills and make new friends from other schools and areas. In addition, since players regularly officiate matches when they are not playing, leadership skills, knowledge and understanding of the game is enhanced. The player also gets to see the game from the official's point of view and gain that respect.

Many players have gone on to be successful college players (at all levels); some are on partial to full athletic scholarships. Others have gone on to coach at the high school or college level or returned to coach at the club level, while others have made significant extra income by also being an official for Parks and Rec programs, YMCA leagues and many other organizations.

Each player has a different experience as a club member. Naturally, some players are more successful than others. Players who put more effort into the program usually get more out of it than those who don't work as hard. Below are the major benefits of our program:

- Instruction: Coaches who have previous college, high school varsity and/or Junior Olympic experience
- Extended Training Schedule: Top collegiate programs work nearly year round because volleyball takes a long time to master. Since high school programs are restricted to a few weeks of practice followed by an intensive match schedule, good technical instruction is hard to obtain during school. Our training allows ample time to work on techniques so players may improve their skill levels
- Quality of play: In many cases, only a few high school players from each team play club. Coincidentally, these players either are or by participating become better players. As a consequence, the quality of play of club teams is often much higher than high school teams.
- New Friendships: Since our players are committed to becoming the best they can be, many new friendships are formed from players from different schools- the world becomes a smaller place.
- Increased Discipline: The time commitment required to be in a junior program requires that study habits improve and players budget their time better. It's also vital players have disciplined work habits on the court
- Exposure to College Recruiters: We cannot guarantee scholarships for all our players but your odds of being recruited go up exponentially by participating in Junior Olympic Volleyball. Coaches or their representatives regularly attend tournaments looking for up-and-coming talent
- Fitness & Jump Training: Conditioning does not play a large part in our plans because it takes vital time away from practices, however, it is necessary for players to be fit in order to succeed. Therefore, Club & Select will participate in 30 minute conditioning sessions each practice day. For those who want to play in college, Vertimax jump training is recommended and available at the Torrington Y. If interested, contact the Club Director.
- Education: We are trying to create educated players, not just better players. Volleyball is a sport in which new situations happen frequently and outstanding players learn to deal effectively with new situations.

### Why Play?

You should also think about why you want to play club (recreation, more experience for high school play, make Varsity, become a starter or possible college scholarship). No matter what your objective, you should be playing because you have fun, love the game and want to play. You must be willing to work hard and take the responsibility for your improvement. Your coach is there to help you work toward your goals.

### College Exposure

Some teams will only travel to tournaments within a 1-2 hour drive, while others will also travel to other parts of east coast. While there is no guarantee that you will be seen by a college coach, the chances are better if you play club ball. The high school season coincides with the college season, making it difficult for college coaches to get out to watch players very often. In many cases the high school matches start around five or six making it difficult for a coach to even get to local matches without having to miss their team's practice. The heaviest recruiting time is during the club season. A majority of college coaches search for prospective players at Junior Olympic Volleyball events. Larger tournaments involving teams from several states, national qualifiers and the Junior Olympic Volleyball National Championships attract the most college coaches.

## **COACHES**

The most important factor is the kind of coaching you will receive. Coaches at each club have a wide range of coaching experiences, from very successful high school and college coaches (head and assistant) to those with little experience. Indeed, the relationship your athlete has with the coach is more important than the club itself. Having a chance to interact with the coach of your athlete's age group is important.

Our coaches range from those with some or all of high school, college, recreation league playing experience and various years of club, high school and college coaching experience. We place coaches at age and ability levels that meet their experience. We conduct pre-season coaching training and on-going mentoring for more inexperienced coaches. When possible, we pair a more inexperienced coach with a head coach so that we can develop future head coaches. We may not have an abundance of experienced coaches, but our small program allows us to commit to improving our coaches ability to provide a positive volleyball experience. Remember, volleyball is a game, and should be played to have FUN.

## **TIME AND TRAVEL COMMITMENT**

Club Volleyball is a huge time and travel commitment. The season will begin in November and December for the Girls Tryouts & Evaluations. Tournaments during season play do not necessarily run on back to back weekends. However, if your team decides to play in a special tournament, your child could be playing tournaments on multiple weekends during one month. You as a parent can decide what level of commitment you want to give to your daughter to play club volleyball.

Teams generally practice around two to 2 1/2 hours at a time and practice one to two times per week. Teams will generally play in at 4-5 tournaments (Developmental & Club), 10 tournaments for Select teams. Tournaments last from one day up to three days.

## **REGISTRATION**

In order to participate in our Junior Olympic Volleyball Club, all players & coaches must be registered with NERVA/USA Volleyball. Once you are registered with NERVA, members are covered by USA Volleyball's sport accident policy, which is the best insurance coverage around. Please note, the insurance provided by USA Volleyball will not cover the club and/or its administrators during practice, tournaments, or tryouts unless ALL the players are registered as NERVA members. You must have your registration PRIOR to the first tryout or evaluation session.

## **TRYOUTS and EVALUATIONS**

The limit on the number of players selected on each team is 10-11. Due to registration, there may be a need to go as high as 12. However, if we have availability of coaches, we will split larger groups into smaller teams.

We take into consideration the following factors into deciding player selection or team placement: age, years of volleyball experience, high school team (if applicable), athletic ability, position played and the total number of registered players. Some players of the same age will be selected to play in an older age division based on their ability to compete and the need for a particular position (setter, middle hitter, libero, etc.) Players will only be moved up if the coaches and the director feel the player can compete at that level.

Select Teams: Tryouts are used to place players on our Select Teams. Coaches will look to select the number of team members who they believe can compete at the highest level and will be able to both compete and contribute to the team's success. Not all players are ready for this experience. The number and level of teams will be based on the number of payers trying out and the number of select level coaches. If a player is not chosen for the Select program, she will automatically be expected to attend Evaluations to be placed on a Club level team, unless told otherwise by the player.

Club Teams: Evaluations are used to determine the club team a player will participate on. At the Club level, players may ask to be grouped with other players from the same school to facilitate carpooling, etc. We will do our best to make it happen, but our main focus when putting teams together is the development of each player and the success of each team.

It's our goal to accommodate all players, but there may be a time when there are more players registered than available roster spots. If this ever happens, the Club Director will discuss options with you. In a rare occurrence, a player may not be skilled enough for the older age team. In this instance, the player may be offered a spot as a practice player only and will be charged a reduced fee.

Developmental Teams: It may not be necessary for players registered for the Developmental teams to participate in evaluations. We will inform you as we get closer to those dates.

## **TEAMS**

The primary objective of club volleyball is to give individuals the training and playing experiences necessary to improve their overall volleyball skills.

### Select Teams (16, 17 & 18s)

This program is for the athlete who is able to play at a high level of play, looking to play in college, and willing & dedicated to attending all scheduled practices & tournaments. Select teams are made up of the elite and more experienced players. These teams will play against the highest level of competition which may include teams from all over the United States and Canada.

The player in this program should expect to get the most training out of their practice regimen and understand that playing time in tournaments will not always be an equal playing field. Players will play based on the position played, ability of an athlete, level of competition, the needs of the team, and the importance of the tournament. Players will be played at the discretion of each team's coach.

We will attempt to field teams in the 16's, 17's and 18's age groups, or other age groups if we feel the teams will be competitive. Practices are approximately 2 hours on Sundays and 90 minutes on one weeknight with an additional 30 minute conditioning sessions each day.

Teams will participate in the five one-day NERVA tournaments and 4 multi-day tournaments starting in January and concluding on May 6.

### Club Teams (14-18s)

USA Volleyball Age groups are 15's, 16's, 17's, and 18's. Club teams compete against other New England Juniors clubs and the tournament sites are generally less than a two-hour drive. However, some teams may have to drive to the Cape, RI, NH or even ME. All players are responsible for their own transportation to and from practices and tournaments.

Practices are approximately 2 hours on Sundays and 90 minutes on one weeknight with an additional 30 minute conditioning sessions each day. The 4-5 Sunday tournaments begin in March and are all day affairs.

Higher performing Club teams may play in one multi-day tournament in either New York, New Jersey or Pennsylvania. The location will be determined by available tournament dates that don't coincide with NERVA dates. Participating in multi-day tournaments against teams outside our region provide a great learning and team bonding experience. Teams that have an overnight experience most often gel as a team and build stronger bonds between players and families. Travel and hotel accommodations are the responsibility of each family. Many families have car pooled and even shared hotel rooms. The cost to participate in a multi-day tournament will be an additional \$100 per player.

### Practice Squad (14-18s)

Practice Squad is for the player who can't commit to the time or financial requirements for club travel teams. Players will practice once a week for two hours and work on the skills necessary to play competitively in club and high school.

### Developmental Club Team (10-14s)

USA Volleyball Age groups are 12's, 14's. Similar to the older Club teams, they compete against other New England Juniors clubs and the tournament sites are generally less than a two-hour drive. All players are responsible for their own transportation to and from practices and tournaments. All players are responsible for their own transportation to and from practices and tournaments. Practices are approximately 2 hours on Sunday afternoons. They will compete in 4-5 Sunday tournaments and are all day events.

### Developmental Clinics

This program is aimed at developing basic skills and team concepts. All those registering will participate equally in the 8 week. Training will be 1 hour per week on Sunday afternoons. Players will be coached by Northwest Juniors Coaches and top-level players in the area.

### ITEMS INCLUDED IN YOUR FEE

- An opportunity to participate in three two-hour practices used for Club level player evaluations
- Training and competition weekly from November (Select)/ December to May
- Team Gear
  - All players will receive a practice shirt
  - All players will receive, for season use only, a uniform top. A \$50 deposit per top will be required and refunded at the conclusion of the season and the return of uniform in good condition.
- Select Teams- A warm up top

- Practice Facilities and Equipment: Each player has a built-in allocation for a share of our expenses for paying for practice facilities, balls, and other necessary equipment.
- Coaches: To insure quality coaching, most of our coaches are paid a stipend. This payment is minimal compared to the time and commitment of our coaches for a five to six-month season.
- Tournament entry fees:
  - NERVA requires each club to host a set number of tournaments and to fund tournament directors stipends and facility rental costs.
  - Multi-day tournament fees for Select teams.
- Coach's hotel accommodations for tournaments over two hours away and multi-day tournaments.
- Administration Expenses: Administration of the club, website, credit card charges, postage, accounting, printing, and other general office expenses.

#### WHAT IS NOT COVERED?

- USA Member Registration Fee- all players must be registered prior to 1st tryout/evaluation. See our website for the web address.
- Team Uniform Club & Select levels:
  - Select Teams: Uniform tops- Black lycra shorts
  - Club Teams: Uniform tops- Black lycra shorts
  - Developmental Teams: Black lycra shorts
- Transportation: Travel to tournaments is not covered in fees. We encourage ride sharing for tournaments and practices
- Meals: Families generally pack a cooler with food and drinks for the whole day, but there are usually concession stands, and of course, restaurants near-by.
- Rooms: Select teams will participate in multiple-day tournaments. Hotel expenses are not covered by your fees

#### REFUND POLICY

All deposits are nonrefundable. Once a player assigned to a team, a team commitment fee is due before the first practice and at this point all payments are non-refundable and still be owed, even if the player does not complete the season.

Teams are formed with a financial requirement for a season of set expenses. If players drop out and don't fulfill their payment agreements, the team is unable to fund all team expenses. In addition, it is very disruptive to a team to lose players at specific positions. If players at this point must be shifted from other teams, this also disrupts this team's experience. It's unfair to so many families if players drop out after teams are formed.

- All deposits are nonrefundable.
- Northwest Juniors is not responsible for any additional fees that may be incurred based on travel to tournaments, hotel accommodations or parking.
- Northwest Juniors is not responsible for any fees incurred for tournaments that maybe cancelled or relocated. We recommend families make hotel reservations that are able to be cancelled within 24 hrs of arrival.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial Assistance may be provided to those who qualify. The application is processed by the partner YMCA and all assistance is awarded based on an approved sliding fee scale that is approved

by that YMCA. Applications must be processed by the end of evaluations, so that it does not affect team numbers. Complete an application from the partner Y nearest you.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Some parents may be able to help us obtain contributions for the program. Funds can be used for new club equipment, team apparel or to assist families who cannot afford to pay the full cost of the program fees but who's daughter will benefit greatly from the experience. If you have a possible supporter, please contact the Club Director for additional information.

### EXPECTATIONS OF PLAYERS

Just showing up for practices isn't enough. We need players who are punctual, who are in the proper frame of mind to work hard, and who pay attention to the coaches and cooperate with teammates and coaches. We recognize that many of our athletes are involved in many school activities and athletic programs while participating in our program. It is not the intent of Northwest Juniors to have girls and/or parents have to choose volleyball over other school activities. We will try and accommodate other school activities.

It is vital to be committed to the program. If you really don't want to participate, don't. If you work hard in practices, matches and scrimmages, you are likely to have a successful season. Players who are committed to improving will have little time for you if you simply wish to turn practices into social events.

Be a good teammate. Stay positive. Give positive feedback on good plays. Control your negative comments about yourself, your coach or fellow players. We're all doing the best we can. Leave providing feed back to players to the coaches.

### IMAGE PRESENTATION

Most of the time, players are not aware when college coaches, administrators or other Directors are present. You can make or break your recruiting chances, or even the chance of a teammate, by the way you act as a member of a team. A positive attitude is everything.

### MAINTAINING GOOD GRADES

Though not all players are trying to earn scholarships, we still consider ourselves a college prep program and you should consider yourselves scholar-athletes and strive for the best possible performance in school.

### PLAYING TIME & POSITIONS

The biggest challenge for any coach is assigning playing time and positions to athletes. Northwest Juniors gives discretion to the coaches in regards to playing time. During pool play of each tournament, all girls will be given playing time. Playing time is not always equal for all girls because of positions played and available players. Once a team enters the playoff portion of an event, it will be at the discretion of the coach as to playing time.

The coach will evaluate the athletes' attitude, ability, practice attendance, needs of the team, competition of opponent and other individual philosophies when it comes to playing time. It is important that each athlete understand she may not receive all the playing time she believes she deserves. At the beginning of the season, players will be asked which positions they would like to

focus on during the season and teams will be formed based on those answers. There may be times at tournaments where the coach will put an athlete in a position he or she feels best suits the team. It may or may not be the same position the athlete plays on their school team. The athlete is welcomed to train at multiple positions, but this will be at the discretion of the coach.

Northwest Juniors coaches may hold team and/or individual meetings to discuss this subject and other philosophies the coach has. It is an expectation the athlete and parents respect the coaches' decisions and give 100% effort towards the success of the team.

### PRACTICE LOCATIONS

Northwest Juniors was created as a YMCA program. This connection allows for us to use the YMCA's that the program is affiliated with at a very low cost for gymnasium space. For the 2016 season, the primary locations for practice and clinics will be the Torrington, Winsted, Greater Waterbury Ys and Taft School. We are always open to using additional locations as we continue to grow, providing the program is able to support additional locations.

### REGULAR ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

We know that not all players can show up to every practice. Exams and other school activities sometimes must take priority. Attendance will be taken by the coaches at each practice and tournament for record keeping purposes. Please inform your coach of conflicts so they can plan their practices and tournaments. If you are going to miss a practice or tournament, please give advanced notice. It is the sole responsibility of the athlete and/or parent to notify the coach regarding an illness, upcoming absence or if the athlete will be late to practice. Like those other school activities, Northwest Juniors is a commitment and we ask that you try your absolute best to keep that commitment the entire season.

All coaches can be emailed through the website rosters. As mentioned earlier, what you want to get out of this program may also depend on your attendance. Remember, your absence not only affects you, but also your team and both of your development. Attendance may play a role in the playing time an athlete receives.

The attendance policy is as follows:

#### Practices

- Excused from Practice: (In-season school sports, family commitment, illness, etc.)
  - Notify the coach beforehand
- Unexcused from Practice: (Did not notify the coach beforehand)
  - 1st Offense – May not start in the next tournament
  - 2nd Offense - Limited playing time in the next tournament
- Late to Practice- Will be dealt with by team coach on a case-by-case basis

#### Tournaments

- Late to Tournament: Will receive less playing time for first two matches of the tournament
- Leave Early from a Tournament (does not help officiate, clean up): Will receive less playing time in the first two matches of the next tournament
- Unexcused Tournament (did not show up for tournament and did not call coach): Limited playing time in the next tournament

## PRACTICE GUIDELINES

When the evaluation process is over and players are assigned to teams, we ask that all spectators for practice remain outside of the gymnasium. Space is small our in gyms, and it becomes a liability to our program if spectators get caught up in a drill. Spectators often are not paying full attention to what's going on and can and will be hit by volleyballs which can cause injury. This is a time to have the coaches' be the "one voice" and work individually with their teams.

## TOURNAMENTS

Teams compete within their own age divisions unless the team chooses to play up a level for additional competition.

### 2018 NERVA Tournament Dates

- NERVA 1: Sunday, March 12
- NERVA 2: Sunday, March 26
- NERVA 3: Sunday, April 9
- NERVA 4: Sunday, April 23
- NERVA Championships: Sunday, May 7\*
  - Teams qualify for Championships by attending 3 of the first 4 NERVA tournaments.

### 2018 Select Multi-Day Tournaments

- Winterfest, Hartford, CT: January 13-15
- NERVA Open Qualifiers, Springfield, MA: February 10-11
- Mizuno Boston Volleyball Festival: March 2-4
- Rhode Island Rumble: April 14-15

## TOURNAMENT EXPECTATIONS:

- Tournament locations for NERVA will be posted roughly mid- week prior to the tournament date. We all would like to play sooner, but the sheer number of teams in the region, the available tournament locations from week to week and the team rankings, makes this process take until then. We appreciate your patience.
- Team levels: teams will move up or down in levels for each age group based on your performance in tournaments. If you win a tournament, you will move up a level. If you come in last in your pool, you may move down a level. The goal is to have teams where they're supposed to be by the final tournament- Championships.
- Enter times for each tournament is the time designated for participants to ENTER the facility. START TIME will be the time the first match begins. All players should expect to be at the location by the ENTER TIME. If you arrive early, please wait in your car or grab a coffee until the designated enter time. It helps the location get the tournament set up, and not have interruptions during that time.
- Once the tournament starts, all players are expected to stay with their team for the entirety of the tournament.
- When the team is not playing, it will be assigned to "work" other matches. This includes refereeing, scoring and calling lines. In NERVA tournaments, coaches are not allowed to participate, just supervise. Up referees are provided to multi-day tournaments, but teams must still provide down referee, scorekeepers and linesmen.
- Lunch time and breaks will be spent with the team and/or coach. It is important for the team to be a cohesive unit, and this provides opportunity for the players to interact off the court. Players will not be able to sit with parents during these times.

- Parents are welcome to leave the facility to get food for players, but no player is allowed to leave the event. Unexpected play-off matches can come up and the team can be penalized if they are not ready to play.
- Always bring court shoes, water bottle, warm-ups, and all issued uniforms.
- Some teams may travel farther distances more than others, this is based on available locations and the seeding of your player's team based on the prior tournament results.

### COMMUNICATION

Our communication program is website based. When we have up-to-date information, the website will be updated and each family will receive an email/text immediately. Please make sure that we have both your child's email and your email and cell phone numbers in our website database, so that you can be notified immediately.

Frequently, pre-tournament information is often delayed and vague. We will release the information as soon as it becomes available. Tournament info will be sent out by email, texts and posted on the Club Website. As a parent/guardian, please familiarize yourself with any information that comes home with your athlete or through email. Please ask your children on a continual basis if they brought any information home with them. As you know, sometimes you may not see it unless you ask

Please be open to the fact that sometimes last minute changes are made and we will do our best to inform you ASAP. It might also be helpful to establish communications with the parents/guardians of the members in the club on your child's team. Your patience and cooperation is appreciated. Knowing this, please think twice about send texts & emails requesting updates. With up to 100 families in the club, that is too high a volume of questions to respond to.

### WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

New England is known for its' constantly changing weather. In the event of severe weather, practice will be cancelled. Announcements will be posted on our website and through e-mail. Please make sure all of your contact information is entered in the club website ([nwctYsports.org](http://nwctYsports.org)) at the start of the season so you can stay informed of any scheduling changes. DO NOT TRAVEL IF YOU DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE DRIVING TO PRACTICE! No accident is worth it. JUST NOTIFY YOUR COACH.

### FACEBOOK

Please join our Facebook page (Northwest Juniors Volleyball) and keep up-to-date with club news. If you take photos at tournaments, upload them and we can see and share them.

### CONFLICTS & COMPLAINTS

Northwest Juniors would like to handle any conflicts and complaints in a professional manner. It is an expectation that all players and parents read the Northwest Juniors Handbook before beginning a complaint process. Northwest Juniors believes this policy is a great first step to open communication without causing further problems.

- Playing time and position conflicts should first be discussed between the coach and player. It is an expectation that both the coach and player conduct any conversations in a civil manner, withholding many emotions that come with this subject.
- Players and coaches discuss issues first. It is the players who play for the coach, not the parents.

- Parents will not be allowed to discuss these issues or any conflicts with coaches unless their daughter is present. This means no email, text or phone conversations.
- Discussions with coaches will not be had until 24 hours AFTER a competition is over. At no time, will a parent and player be able to address the Coach in the middle of an event.
- If any parent or guardian has a conflict or complaint, we ask that they contact the Club Director immediately. Contact information is always available on the [www.nwctYsports.org](http://www.nwctYsports.org) website.

### EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Yes, parents, we do expect some things from you. We are a club (and a non-profit organization at that), and sometimes parents forget that just writing out a dues check does not keep the club operating smoothly. Please remember there are several areas in which you can help us:

- Pay fees on time. If fees are not paid on time, coaches, tournament fees, and bills cannot be paid. Remember, players will be withheld from participation in tournaments and practices if fee payments are not made on time.
- Solicit corporate grants and sponsorships. Parents have the contacts available to help us gain sponsorships for our team.
- Please watch your daughter when she competes. Although she may not let you know, she will appreciate if you are there to cheer her on when you can. Also, remember your daughter has a coach, let the coach do their job while the players are on the court and you as parents are their "positive" cheerleader. Please no coaching from the sideline, it confuses your daughter.
- As spectators, please be courteous! Some of the match officials or scorekeepers are going to be young players. You are not going to like all the calls the referees or lines people make (if at all) but parents need to be role models for the players. Remember, others see you as a representative of our club, as well as, the players and coaches.

### PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

It is important for Parents and/or Spectators to understand this section. Everyone must remember that you are there to support your child and their team. Parents of a volleyball player have a shared responsibility with the player. A few of the biggest responsibilities are encouraging good sportsmanship and responsible behavior, support and encourage your child win or lose, providing support financially and assist with transportation. Parents also have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a reasonable, responsible manner. Parents must be aware that they have as much, if not more, influence on the chemistry of their team than the coach. How can a player be a good team member when they have to listen to a parents bad mouth their teammates or coach? How can the team have good chemistry when parents sit in the stands and make disparaging comments about players or coaches to other parents?