

**UNITED STATES YOUTH**



™

**VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE**

**THE  
CULTURE  
OF  
USYVL**

**USYVL Codes & Policies  
Parents' Introduction to Youth Volleyball**

# About USYVL

## USYVL AND ITS MISSION

The United States Youth Volleyball League's mission is to provide every child between the ages of 7 and 14 a chance to learn and play volleyball in a fun, safe, supervised environment. One of the main tenets of the program is to encourage children to do their best with their abilities. With an emphasis on positive reinforcement, the program seeks to build confidence and self-esteem in each child.

## PHILOSOPHIES

**Every Child Plays** Our goal is for kids to play volleyball—we rotate all the players in and out so that every child is a starter.

**Balanced Teams** We require every site at the start of each season to set up teams as evenly balanced as possible. It's more fun when teams are of equal ability.

**Positive Coaching** This builds positive team spirit. We train and encourage our coaches to make the extra effort to understand and offer positive help to our players, rather than negative criticism.

**Open Registration** Our programs are open to all children ages 7-14 who want to register to play volleyball. Interest and enthusiasm are the only requirements for playing.

**Good Sportsmanship** We create a positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude. All of our programs are designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of USYVL.

## EVERYONE HELPS OUT

USYVL is a volunteer organization with more than 5,000 parents, many of them working as coaches and administrators. It's not unusual to find two, three or more children in the same family playing USYVL—while Mom and Dad serve as Coach and Assistant Coach. It can be a total family experience!

## THE GROWTH OF USYVL

USYVL was founded in 1997 in Ventura, California with 139 players. Today that number has grown to more than 15,000 players annually, nationwide.

## WHY USYVL WORKS

USYVL works because our volunteers work. The volunteers work because they believe in the USYVL philosophies. Our phenomenal growth reflects USYVL's commitment to a healthy competitive sports atmosphere and the development of responsible individuals.

## WHAT MAKES USYVL TICK

USYVL was founded on community involvement. Volunteer staff members are instructed on the best way to organize their site. The foundation of USYVL is the "Site," or basic community program. Each Site is headed by a Site Director who conducts business within the framework of USYVL's philosophies, Rules and Regulations and Bylaws.

# About USYVL

## WHAT MAKES USYVL TICK (continued)

A Board of Directors governs the overall USYVL organization.

The staff of USYVL's national headquarters in Torrance, California works closely

with the volunteer members and interfaces directly with each Site.

The headquarters provides many services: computerized registration; publications; liability and accident insurance; training for coaches and administrators; and more. Communicate by phone at (888) 988-7985 or e-mail at [USYVL@aol.com](mailto:USYVL@aol.com).

## What is a "Site"?

Whether you are a veteran USYVL volunteer or you're new at this volleyball business, you may be wondering just what is this thing called a USYVL Site and how it works.

Your USYVL Site is one of several local programs in communities nationwide. Each USYVL Site is the same, yet different.

That means USYVL Bylaws and Rules and Regulations standardize the operational procedures and playing rules. But because community needs and characteristics may be different, Sites have the flexibility to establish meeting days, times and locations.

Your Site has dedicated volunteers working to ensure the

program is run effectively and USYVL philosophies are upheld. Your Site Director and Volunteer Staff will usually meet once a month during the season and perhaps more often for pre-season planning.

You are welcome to attend any of these meetings. Many Sites give out a handbook at registration, with the policies fully defined. The handbook may cover everything from rainy-day procedures, practice routines and important telephone numbers to lost-and-found information. Read it and keep it handy.

Get to know your child's volleyball coach and other parents. Volunteer your time, skills and energies to make your USYVL Site run well. This way, both you and your child benefit from the USYVL experience.

### Here's what you can expect from your Site:

1. A fun volleyball experience for your child during games and practices.
2. Coaches who understand the USYVL philosophies and support them.
3. Technical training for coaches.
4. Caring volunteers to manage the "business" of the Site.
5. A national organization for support and guidance.

# The Game of Volleyball

Volleyball is a simple game. It requires a court, a net, a ball, two teams of players and a referee.

Volleyball is played by two teams on a court 30' X 60'. A 25' X 50' court is used for younger players.

Practices are held one day a week with games occurring on a second day of the week. Games are played to 25 points or 20 minutes, whichever comes first. The age 7-9 division plays for 20 minutes, no score is kept.

## The Team

A team has 6-8 players with a maximum of 4 players on the court at game time. Players get more “touches” on the ball, learn skills quicker and have more fun using this method.

Teams are co-ed and divided into three divisions: one for 7-9 year-olds, one for 10-11 year-olds and one for 12-14 year-olds.

Each team offers the following positions:

### The Right Side Hitter

Their primary duty is to pass, hit and block on the right side of the court.

### The Left Side Hitter

Their primary duty is to pass, hit and block on the left side of the court.

### The Setter

They are responsible for the second contact of the ball; the set. Placing the ball in front of the right or left side hitters to hit.

### The Middle Back

They are responsible for passing and defending the middle and back of the court. They also serve the ball into play.

## Volleyball Skills

The sport involves several basic skills: Spiking, Serving, Setting, Court Movement, Passing, Digging and Blocking the ball.

### Spiking

This fundamental skill incorporates an above-the-head full swinging arm motion forward, hitting the ball to the opposition. This is used to send the ball into the opponent's court at maximum speed, or medium to slow speeds. Youth player's may stand and hit (attack), or incorporate an approach and/or jump before the arm swing.

### Serving

The serve is used to put the ball into play. The action is done with an arm-swing that sends the ball over the net into the opponent's court.

### Setting

The fundamental action has the ball momentarily on the finger pads, cradled with two hands at a contact point just above the head, before being rebounded with a double-arm extension. The skill is used to put up the second contact ball for the hitter. A bump set, similar in technique to a forearm pass, may also be used.

## Volleyball Skills (continued)

### Court Movement

Court movement is used to situate players in the best position to perform the other skills. Court movement, which incorporates “run-past skills,” includes player positioning to receive the ball and player positioning to hit (attack) the ball. Agility and coordination skills necessary to get to the ball are part of court movement. Court rotations, the clockwise rotation of players after a side-out has occurred, is also taught in court movement.

### Passing Forearm/Overhead

The forearm pass is used to receive the ball from the opponent, as in service. A forearm pass is achieved by extending the arms away from the body in a motion that bring the hands together and places the elbows close together creating a flat platform with the forearms. The fundamental action has the player hit the ball off tightly held together forearms from the straddle stance position. The overhead pass may be used to receive a first contact ball from the opponent or to return the third contact ball to the opponent. The motion is similar to the setting motion, with the

arm extension resulting in a lower trajectory for the contacted ball.

### Digging

This is used to receive the opponent’s hit (attack). The key skills include the dig and extension rolling. The dig resembles the forearm pass for a ball near the defender, and becomes a “sprawl” type action when trying to touch the ball that is farther away. The extension roll is used to reach a ball more than a long stride away, where the player must fully lunge out along the floor, and roll over onto his/her back to return to his/her feet.

### Blocking

This is used to stop the ball from crossing the net, blocking the ball immediately back into the opponent’s court, or slowing the ball down for floor defenders. The basic defensive action is jumping at the net and holding both arms straight above the head to deflect the attack. A skill rarely needed by the lower skill levels, blocking will be taught exclusively to the older age groups toward the end of the USYVL season.

## Equipment: What Players Need

Volleyball has limited equipment requirements. Each player is provided with a USYVL T-shirt (Red, White or Blue) and volleyball, unless the NO BALL Option is selected. Shirt, shorts or sweats and athletic shoes are mandatory during practice and games. Full-coverage shoes are required. Sites provide court equipment, such as net systems.



## The Referees

Referees are required at all games. Coaches handle this responsibility. The children should be taught to respect the referees and never argue with them.

## Modified USYVL Rules

**Rule Interpretation:** Judgment of ball handling is loosened to promote the acquisition of skills. The attempt to perform a skill correctly is more important than if the ball were cleanly handled. Double contacts are legal on the first contact after the ball has come over the net. The rule that does not allow the ball to “visibly come to rest” is loosened. Rotation order is still used. Players are encouraged to call their own violations. Younger players want organized games, but not complicated game rules. With the USYVL program, the use of non-standard scoring and skill variations will be utilized. For the youngest age division, scores are not kept.

### USYVL Game Rules:

#### The Service:

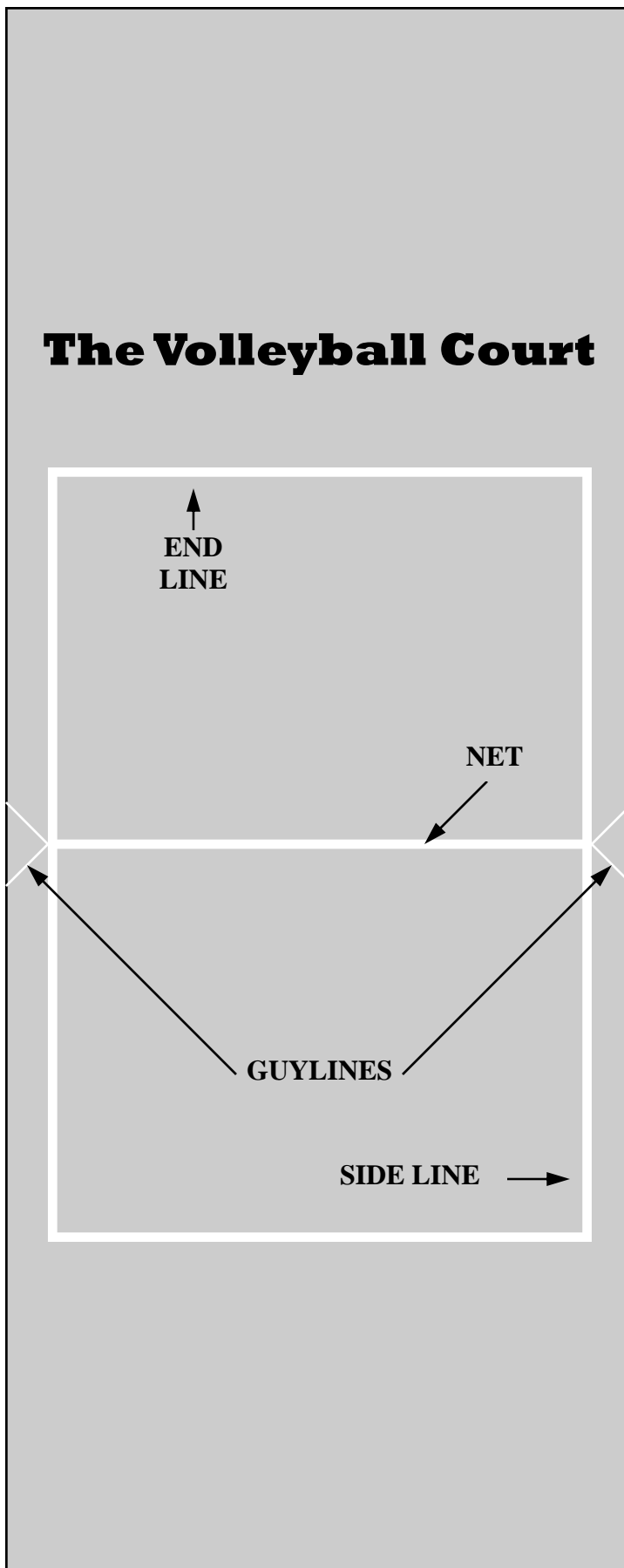
The referee signals for each service. This is how the ball is put into play. The server will stand behind the end line. The ball must be hit so as to cross the net (note: it can touch the net. This is called a “let” serve) and land in the opponent’s court.

#### Playing the Ball:

A maximum of three contacts per side to get the ball over the net is allowed. A block does not count as a contact. Only front row players may block. Blocking a serve is not legal. The ball cannot visibly come to rest in a player’s hands or arms. A ball that comes to rest in a player’s hands or arms is called a held ball. A held ball is permitted on the first contact by 7-9 year-old players in certain game types.

#### Play at the Net:

A ball, other than a served ball, that hits the net between the antennae line (imaginary line perpendicular to the boundary lines) may be continued in play. Players are not allowed to touch the net unless the ball has hit the net



## Rules (continued)

with such force that the net strikes the player.

### Ball in Play/Dead Ball:

The ball is in play when it is legally contacted for service. The ball is dead when:

- It does not cross the net completely between the antennae line
- It hits the ground (or indoors, the wall)
- It passes fully under the net or outside the antennae line
- A player commits a fault
- A referee's whistle blows, even if inadvertently.

A ball that hits the court boundary line is considered "in."

### Team and Player Faults:

If players on opposing teams commit simultaneous faults, the play is replayed (e.g. other players in the net). When scoring applies, a fault by a serving team results in a side out. A fault occurs when:

- The ball touches the ground
- The ball is clearly held (when game structure does not permit a held ball)
- A team touches the ball more than three times consecutively
- A ball touches a player twice consecutively, except when blocking
- A ball is illegally served
- An illegal block occurs
- The ball does not completely cross the net between the antennae lines
- A player touches the net
- A player reaches under the net and touches either an opposing player or the ball
- A ball lands outside of the court (or, indoors, the ball strikes an object).

### Court Rotation:

After a side out, the team earning the side out will rotate in a clockwise direction. If there are more than four players on a team (and this is likely), players will enter the rotation in the Right Side Hitter position and rotate out from the Setter position.

## CODES OF CONDUCT

### For USYVL Staff and Volunteers

USYVL always considers the welfare of the children first. Players are encouraged to do their best through positive coaching techniques. A low-pressure and safe environment is maintained. Competition level is given minimal importance and the focus is on participation and fun.

EVERY CHILD PLAYS!

## Player's Code

- Play for the fun of it, not just to please your parents or coach.
- Play by the Laws of the Game.
- Never argue with or complain about referees' calls or decisions.
- Control your temper. Most of all, resist the temptation to retaliate when you feel you have been wronged.
- Concentrate on playing volleyball with your best efforts. Work equally hard for your team as for yourself.
- Be a good sport by cheering all good plays, whether it is your team's or your opponent's.
- Treat all players as you would like to be treated.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve skills and feel good. Don't be a showoff or a court hog.

Cooperate with your coaches, teammates, opponents and the referees.

## Parent's Code: Your Role in USYVL

As a parent, you have a special role in contributing to the needs and development of these youngsters. Through your encouragement and good example, you can help assure the effectiveness of the USYVL program.

### Support Your Child:

Support your child by giving encouragement and showing an interest in his or her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory. Your child will be a winner, even in defeat.

### Always Be Positive:

Parents are not participants on their child's team. However, they do contribute to the success experienced by their child and the team. Parents serve as role models for their children. Applaud good plays by your child's team and by the opposing team. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth sporting activities.

### Be Enthusiastic and Supportive:

Let children set their own goals and play the game for themselves. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals on your child. Don't put too heavy a burden on your child to win games. Surveys reveal that 72 percent of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winner.

### Reinforce Positive Behavior:

The best way to help a child to achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through

positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that he or she is still learning. Encourage your child's efforts and point out the good things they accomplished.

### Let Coaches Coach and Refs Ref:

Coaches and referees are usually parent volunteers. They volunteer their time to help make your child's youth volleyball experience a positive one. They need your support, too. What coaches and referees don't need is your help in coaching from the sidelines. So, please refrain from coaching during games and practices. Referees are not the "bad guys". They are volunteers, too, and need your support and encouragement. Treat them and their calls fairly and respectfully.

## Referee's Code

Always remember the game is for the players. Player safety and fair play come first.

Study and learn the Laws of the Game and understand the "spirit" of the Laws. Help fellow referees do the same.

Encourage and enforce the USYVL philosophies of "Every Child Plays," "Positive Coaching" and "Good Sportsmanship."

Respect other referees' decisions, and do not publicly criticize another official.

Stay calm when confronted with emotional reactions from players, coaches and parents.

Support good sportsmanship with a kind word to players, coaches and parents of both teams when deserved.

Always be fair and impartial, avoiding conflicts of interest. Decisions based on personal bias are dishonest and unacceptable.

## Coaches Code:

Enthusiastically support and practice the "Every Child Plays," "Good Sportsmanship" and "Positive Coaching" philosophies of USYVL.

Be reasonable in your demands on a young player's time, energy, enthusiasm and performance on the volleyball court.

Impress on your players that they must abide by the Laws of the Game at all times.

Develop team respect for the ability of opponents, and for the judgment of referees and opposing coaches.

Ensure that your players have a fun and enjoyable volleyball experience (winning is only

part of it). Players should never be yelled at or ridiculed for making mistakes or losing a game.

Set a good example and be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Children need a coach they can respect.

Keep informed of sound principles of coaching, growth and child development.

Check your equipment and playing facilities. They should meet safety standards and be appropriate for the age and ability of your players.

Follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured child is ready to play again.

# Being a USYVL Volunteer

## What are volunteers?

People who give freely of their time and talent to a worthwhile group or cause. A volunteer is someone who believes that people make a difference and is willing to prove it.

## What is a USYVL volunteer?

A coach, a first-aid administrator, a registrar, many people, all contributing their time and efforts to make USYVL a great program for our volleyball-playing kids.

## Why does USYVL need volunteers?

USYVL needs volunteers because people power runs USYVL. Volunteers strengthen USYVL by giving their time and energy, their ideas and ideals. Volunteers make USYVL happen.

## Who can be a USYVL volunteer?

Almost anyone can volunteer, moms, dads, sisters, brothers, even grandparents. We need women and men, young, middle-aged and “young at heart” folks. USYVL wants volunteers who want to help make our volleyball program a fun experience for kids.

Every child plays in USYVL, and everyone has something special to contribute to the program.

- They contribute a special skill or ability.
- They contribute their time.
- They contribute their energy.
- They contribute themselves.

## What do USYVL volunteers do?

They do what is needed to make the program work.

- They coach teams.
- They set up and take down nets.
- They referee games.

## How do USYVL volunteers help themselves?

USYVL volunteers gain satisfaction and growth from their experiences. They make new friends. They learn new skills. They develop creativity. They investigate new careers. They enrich their lives.

## How do I become a USYVL volunteer?

It is easy. Talk to your child’s coach, call your Site Director or any of the USYVL Staff. They will be most helpful—and happy—to find the right job for you.

# PLAY IT SAFE

## Buddies

Advise your child never to leave a practice or game alone. Always walk with a buddy whenever possible.

## Code Word

If you normally pick your child up from the field, but have to send someone else, use a code word. That way, if someone comes up and says “Your mother sent me to pick you up,” but they don’t have the code word you and your child have established, your child knows not to go with them.

## REFUND POLICY

If for any reason you need to drop out of the league, a written request must be received a minimum of 7 days prior to the league start date, you will receive a refund of 50% of the registration fees paid or a nonrefundable credit valid for one year from the date of issue. However, no refunds will be issued if you cancel within 7 days of the scheduled league start date, or if you fail to participate in the league. Financial aid is available. Please call the office at 1-888-988-7985 for additional information. Please visit the USYVL website at [www.usyvl.org](http://www.usyvl.org) for additional information about our policies. Any player who becomes injured and can no longer continue will receive a pro-rated tuition refund less a \$35 administrative fee, \$10 shirt fee, \$20 ball fee, and \$5 medal fee, with a doctor's note or a hospital administration slip.