



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Last Revised: September 2022

Article I – Coaches

1. Head Coaches
 - (A) There shall be one head coach assigned to each Saratoga Volleyball Club (“Saratoga VBC”) team.
 - (B) Head coaches must have prior volleyball experience either as a player or coach. The level of that experience may determine team assignment.
 - (C) All head coaches are interviewed by the Saratoga VBC Director (i.e., head of volleyball operations) and must be approved by the Board of Directors by a simple majority vote.
 - (D) Head coaches shall be Safesport certified before interacting with club members as required by USA Volleyball (USAV).
 - (E) Head coaches must be IMPACT certified prior to the first competition.
 - (F) The head coach’s role is to teach skills and strategy to their individual team.
2. Assistant Coaches
 - (A) Multiple assistant coaches may be assigned to each Saratoga VBC team.
 - (B) Assistant coaches are interviewed by the Club Director and may be assigned to teams at the director’s discretion without Board approval.
 - (C) Assistant coaches shall be Safesport certified before interacting with club members as required by USAV.
 - (D) Current club players that are eligible for 17U or 18U teams may be considered by the Club Director for Assistant Coaching positions for 13U to 16U teams.

Article II – Tryouts

1. Purpose
 - (A) Saratoga VBC shall conduct tryouts for the purpose of determining invitation to join the club and to assign players to teams.
 - (B) A parents meeting will be held prior to tryouts to discuss club policies and procedures.
2. Registration
 - (A) All participants must register for tryouts and provide the requested information.
 - (B) Registration will be conducted via TeamSnap, or other board approved organizational software. No other form of registration will be accepted (e.g., verbal request, email, etc.).
 - (C) All registrants must have a full or tryout membership with the Excelsior Empire Regional Volleyball Association (XLRVA) region of USAV to participate.
 - (D) All registrants will turn in a USAV medical release form before participating.
3. Execution
 - (A) The number/demographics of registrants in a given year will determine the format for tryouts (e.g., age groupings, number of tryout dates, etc.).
 - (B) Open gyms may be held prior to tryouts depending on gym availability.
 - (C) At least two tryout dates will be held each season. Registrants are expected to attend at least one of the tryouts but may attend more than one.
 - (D) If a registrant cannot attend one of the tryout dates, an alternate tryout can be conducted with agreement from the club director.
 - (E) Registrants will be grouped with players of the same or similar age group for tryouts

Article III – Team Formation

1. Number of Teams

- (A) The number of teams in the club will be determined based on a combination of the number of registrants, tryout assessments, available Head Coaches, and gym space.
- (B) The Saratoga VBC may consist of teams from 13U through 18U. Multiple teams in an age group may be formed, or no teams in an age group may be formed depending on club demographics.

2. On-Age Team Policy

- (A) Players will only be considered for teams consistent with their USAV age eligibility (currently, July 1 cutoff). Please reference, the “USA VOLLEYBALL - JUNIOR PLAYER AGE DEFINITION CHART” for age eligibility.
- (B) The Saratoga VBC does not currently offer 12U teams. 12U eligible players that are in 6th or 7th grade may try out and be considered for placement on a 13U team.

3. Exceptional Player Play-up Policy

- (A) Any player/parent/coach who believes that being placed on an on-age team would not provide an appropriate competitive environment may request that the player be evaluated during tryouts for placement on an older age division team as an exceptional player.

The decision on a player's exceptional player request to play-up will be based solely on the technical ability, tactical acumen, talent, and athleticism (size, speed, agility, strength, etc.) of player relative to the top 1/3 of the pool of players for the older age division.

- The Saratoga VBC believes that a player must be an exceptional player within the older age division and not merely “make the team” or be better than most players on the on-age team. The default is to place players on-age.
- A player must be evaluated as being clearly in the top 1/3 of the pool of players for the older age division. In addition, the player/parents must have a level of commitment to practice and playing that is consistent with the older age division team.
- Factors that do not directly affect the appropriateness of volleyball development shall not be considered in evaluating a player request to play-up. Such factors include but are not limited to siblings on the older age division team, friends on the older age division team, carpools, or desire to play for a particular coach.
- No player shall be placed on a team in an older age division as an exceptional player for the primary purpose of strengthening that team.
- The number of players allowed to play-up on any particular team as exceptional players will be limited.
- All players joining a Saratoga VBC team after tryouts have been completed, shall be placed in the appropriate on-age division.

- The Director of Volleyball may invite players to play-up on a particular team based upon a particular skill position that may be required to balance the needs of an older age division or for other volleyball skill development reasons. These players must be in the same peer group (i.e., school grade) as the majority of the team they are joining so the exceptional player requirement (i.e., top 1/3) does not need to be met.

(B) Player Requests To Play-Up / Procedures

- Parents/guardians must submit a written request (email, mail, or delivery) to the Director of Volleyball no later than 2 weeks prior to the first scheduled try out.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified by email that their request has been received at least 1 week prior to the player evaluation/tryout date. The Director of Volleyball shall forward the request to play-up to the Volleyball Operations Committee for player evaluation.
- No player requesting to be evaluated for playing up will be evaluated without the timely submission of the appropriate request.
- Players must attend both the on-age player evaluation tryout and the older age division player evaluation tryout. Failure to attend both player evaluation tryouts shall result in denial of the request to play-up.
- The Volleyball Operations Committee may consult with previous Coaches, Age Group Trainers, Team Selection Coordinators and others as deemed appropriate before rendering a decision.
- Following player evaluation/tryouts, the Volleyball Operations Committee shall submit their decision regarding the Request to play-up to the Director of Volleyball.
- The Director of Volleyball shall inform the players/parents/guardians of the decision rendered by the Volleyball Operations Committee with respect to their request to play-up.
- All player placement decisions are final. There is no appeal process.
- All tryout notes, comparative results and evaluations used in rendering a decision on a request to play-up are strictly confidential and will not be released by the Volleyball Operations Committee. Team coaches may use a player's tryout evaluation information to discuss a player's strengths and weaknesses with that player and/or their parent/guardian.

(C) Players may decline an offer to play above their age eligibility. No player/parent shall be adversely affected for deciding not to play on a team in an older age division. A player/parent decision not to play on a team in an older age division shall be strictly confidential.

4. Team Types

- (A) Teams will be either formed as a Select team or a Competitive team.
- (B) When there are enough players in an age group to form more than one team, Select team(s) and Competitive team(s) may be formed.
- (C) When there are only enough players in an age group to form one team, that team may be designated as Select or Competitive depending on the general skill level of the team.
- (D) Select teams will typically be smaller (9-10 players), Competitive teams will typically be larger (10-12 players) to increase opportunities to develop players.

- (E) Only players that can commit to all tournaments will be considered for placement on a Select team due to the competitive goals for those teams. Players that expect to be absent for tournaments due to other activities (e.g., school sports) can still participate on Competitive teams that will typically carry larger rosters.
 - (F) Select teams should expect to travel more and play in higher level tournaments. Competitive teams should expect to play mostly local tournaments.
 - (G) All teams designated officially by the club shall have equal rights to practice times, equipment, uniforms, teaching sessions and any other considerations in the performance of a team.
5. Developmental Players
- (A) Players may be invited to participate in the club as practice players if they are not assigned to a team after tryouts.
 - (B) Developmental players will have a reduced club fee (no tournament fee) but may be elevated to a tournament roster if the need arises. If a developmental player does participate in a tournament, they will be assessed a fee on a per tournament basis.
 - (C) Developmental players will be trained and coached in the same manner as the team players.

Article IV – Practice

1. Practice Format
- (A) Each team will have two scheduled practice each week.
 - (B) Practice will include team skill development and position-specific training each week.
 - (C) Practice will run from late November, after tryouts, through April or May depending on the tournament schedule.
 - (D) Optional skill and positional clinics will be held throughout the season as a 3rd day of volleyball training. These clinics will have separate registrations for each session.
2. Attendance
- (A) The club is flexible in regards to conflicts with other activities; however, practice attendance will be taken and factored into playing time decisions by the coaches.
 - (B) Missed practices must be communicated with the coach at least 24 hours in advance with a valid reason (e.g., conflict with another activity).
 - (C) Players are expected to attend the practice immediately prior to a tournament. Missing this practice will result in the player sitting out the first match of the tournament. Exceptions will be made for emergencies and illness if communicated with the coach.

Article V – Tournaments

1. Schedule
- (A) Each team will be registered for approximately 8 tournaments depending on tournament schedules/availability.
 - (B) Tournaments typically start in January and can run through May.
 - (C) The club will make an effort to spread tournaments out over the season depending on the availability of tournaments.
 - (D) The club will avoid tournaments scheduled during school breaks on a best effort basis. However, some tournaments are held annually over holiday weekends (e.g., Icicle Challenge – Presidents Day Weekend, start of winter break).
 - (E) The tournament schedule will be communicated by the end of December.

2. Tournament Types
 - (A) Select teams will be registered for 2 to 3 select tournaments each season to complement a slate of local tournaments and the season-ending regional championships.
 - (B) Competitive teams will be registered for local tournaments only and the season-ending regional championships.
 - (C) Select tournaments are typically two-day or three-day tournaments that may require travel but could be local (e.g., Great Nor'easter).
 - (D) Local tournaments are typically one-day tournaments held within driving distance for a day trip (within 2.5 hours or less).
3. Attendance
 - (A) Attendance at all tournaments is expected for Select teams (other than emergencies or illness).
 - (B) There is some additional attendance flexibility for Competitive teams due to larger rosters.
 - (C) Absences must be communicated with the coach and club director at least a month in advance (other than emergencies and illness) so that roster adjustments can be made. Missed tournaments without notice and/or a reasonable excuse could result in lost playing time and potentially expulsion from the club.

Article VI – Membership, Dues

1. Memberships
 - (A) All club members, players and coaches, must have a current season USAV/XLRVA membership.
 - (B) After team assignments are communicated, players will have one week to informally accept their club invitation (e.g., email) so that roster adjustments can be made.
 - (C) After informal acceptance, formal club invitations will be sent out via SportsEngine and must be accepted within a week.
 - (D) All players and coaches must be formally accepted into the club (via SportsEngine) to be placed on a roster.
2. Club Dues
 - (A) Two sets of club dues will be assessed each season:
 - a. Base Dues cover practice time, uniforms, coaching, administration, etc. A separate, reduced base dues will be assessed for developmental players.
 - b. Tournament Dues cover tournament fees and coaches' travel.
 - (B) Base Dues are the same for all players and will be assessed after tryouts. An estimate will be provided at the parents meeting.
 - (C) Tournament Dues will depend on the number of tournaments a team is registered for, and the types of tournaments scheduled (e.g., Select vs. Competitive). These dues will be assessed after the tournament schedule is communicated. An estimate will be provided at the parents meeting.
 - (D) Payment plans and payment options will be established once the final cost is set and invoices are sent out to the club. However, reasonable installment options (e.g., 3 monthly payments) will be offered along with a lump sum. Payment plans may be customized based on financial need.

(E) Once invoices are sent, on-time payment is expected. Invoices that are over 30 days overdue could incur late fees without notification of the club director with a reasonable excuse.

3. Team Parent Discount

(A) Preference for Team Parent selection will be given to those families with a qualified economic hardship first. A form will be made available on the club website for families to apply for financial assistance. These applications will be reviewed in confidence by the Board of Directors.

(B) Financial assistance will be provided to qualified candidates and allow for a discount to both Base and Tournament Dues in exchange for participation as the Team Parent. A partial discount will be given at the time of registration and payment of Tournament Dues. The balance will be credited at season-end for fulfillment of the Team Parent responsibilities.

(C) Team Parent may be a split role with the financial assistance split between the parties.

(D) Team Parent Responsibilities

a. Facebook or other social media group administration

b. TeamSnap Management

i. Monitor Team Schedule & Player Availability

ii. Monitor & Respond to Chat, Post & Email Features

iii. Monitor and Coordinate Ride Shares

b. Player Training

i. Track Completion of Referee (R2) and Scorekeeper Training

c. Games and Tournament Coordination

i. Live Streaming Coordination (best effort) – Facebook or other

ii. Team Hotel Blocks & Reservations

iii. 1 Bonding Activity (dinner, bowling, etc.) and 1 Volunteer Activity

iv. Ride Shares

v. Tournament Schedule Communications – game and work times

Article VII – Sportsmanship, Conduct

1. Conduct

(A) All club members, players and coaches must agree to the USAV code of conduct as a condition for membership to USAV and the club.

(B) Players found to be in violation of the code of conduct will be referred to the Board of Directors for discipline.

2. Sportsmanship

(A) Players and coaches are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that best represents the club at tournaments and practice.

(B) Players and coaches conducting themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner as determined by the Board of Directors will be given a warning. Subsequent incidents will result in disciplinary action.

3. Drug Use

(A) Drug or alcohol use is prohibited at all club events. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at a club event is also prohibited.

(B) Players or coaches found in violation of this drug policy by the Board of Directors shall be expelled from the club immediately (zero tolerance) until the grievance process has been met through club policy (Article VIII).

4. Harassment, Anti-Bullying and Zero Tolerance Policy

- (A) The Saratoga VBC is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals or organizations involved with the Club are treated with respect. Membership and registration with the club as well as participation in its activities, brings many benefits and privileges. At the same time, registrants and or organizations are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations including but not limited to complying with the Clubs By-Laws, Policies and Procedures.
- (B) Irresponsible behavior by members, parents, volunteers, administrators, staff members, contractors or officers can result in severe damage to the integrity of the club. Conduct that violates these values may be subject to sanctions pursuant to this Policy.
- (C) Saratoga VBC is a strong supporter of making sport safe for its youth. This policy is to help ensure the safety and enjoyment for all, by condemning all forms of abuse - verbal, physical, emotional and sexual – while attempting to protect individuals from abuse. Therefore, Saratoga VBC has zero tolerance as it relates to all forms of abuse.
- (D) Immediately report any bullying or harassment incidents/behavior to the club. A complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a club official (coach or board member) but must be followed up in writing (letter and/or email).
- (E) The club will take every concern seriously, investigate the issue and report back to you in a timely manner. In serious cases, parents may be asked to come in to discuss the problem. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- (F) If bullying/harassment is found, it will be stopped immediately by removal of the player(s) from the club until the grievance process has been met through club policy (Article VIII). A record will be kept on the incident(s), investigation and any action(s) taken.
- (G) The bully will be placed on probationary period with the club of no less than six (6) months.

Article VII – Discipline; Expulsion

1. The Board of Directors shall have the power to deal with violations of the "Laws of the Game", and the rules and regulations of the Club or any league, tournament or provider of fields or other facilities in which a Club team participates, or any regional, state or national body or association directly or indirectly governing any thereof or to which any thereof are affiliated including, but not limited to, the Excelsior Empire Regional Volleyball Association (XLRVA), and USA Volleyball (USAV), or with misconduct by, and to discipline, any of its Coaches, players, teams or members, including expulsion, imposition of reasonable fines and suspensions and, if deemed appropriate, reinstatement.

Article VIII – Ombudsman; Grievances

1. The Executive Board shall appoint from among its members (including for such purposes any one or more Officers and Directors Emeritus) a Club Ombudsman, to receive complaints and grievances from coaches, players and their families.
2. The Club shall establish a Grievance Committee to manage complaints and grievances with respect to individual player, coaching or team matters. The Grievance Committee will also administer behavioral and sportsmanship incidents. The members of the Grievance Committee shall be selected by the Club's President, with the approval of the Executive Board. The Club Ombudsman shall be the Chair of the Grievance Board. Members of the Grievance Committee, other than the Chair, need not be members of the Executive Board.

The Grievance Committee shall have the authority to expel, suspend and fine any player, coach, team, team official, club official, parent or other team and/or club supporter.

3. The Executive Board shall adopt rules pertaining to the administration of the Grievance Committee and make such rules available on the Club's website.
4. Decisions of the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding unless and until overturned under appeal. A decision of the Grievance Committee may be appealed only to the full Executive Board. All determinations by the Executive Board shall be final, except as an appeal with respect to a player is otherwise required to be granted under the rules of USAV or XLRVA.
5. No team, player, coach, team, team official, Club official, parent or other team and/or Club supporter may invoke the aid of or appeal to XLRVA or USAV or any other such volleyball governing body without first exhausting all available remedies within the Club, nor invoke the aid of the courts of the United States or of a State without first exhausting all available remedies within the Club, USAV and XLRVA. For a violation of this rule, the offending party shall be subject to suspension and fines, and shall be liable to the Club for all expenses incurred by the Club and its officers, directors and other representatives in defending each court action, including but not limited to the following: (A) court costs; (B) attorneys' fees; (C) reasonable compensation for time spent by Club officials and employees in responding to and defending against allegations in the action, including responses to discovery and court appearances; (D) travel expenses; and (E) expenses for holding special meetings necessitated by the court action.

Complaints and Grievances Rules and Regulations

1. The Grievance Committee.

- A. Composition. There will be no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) members of the Grievance Committee, including the Chair. The Club's President, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall select the members, including the Chair, of the Grievance Committee for one or two year terms. The Chair shall be a member of the Executive Board of the Club; the other members may but need not be members of the Executive Board.
- B. Voting. Each member of the Grievance Committee, including the Chair, shall be entitled to one (1) vote. The Chair may cast a vote the same as other members. A minimum of three (3) members, including the Chair, shall be required to hear a case and render a decision. No member of the Grievance Committee shall participate at any other level of appeal or discipline.
- C. Participants. The Grievance Committee reserves the right to determine the participants and number of participants that may attend a Grievance Committee meeting.
- D. Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee will convene at the discretion of the Chair.

2. Complaints and Grievances.

- A. Validity. To be valid and eligible for consideration, each complaint or grievance must be in writing, describe the complaint or grievance, and be signed by the aggrieved party or if the aggrieved party is a player, a parent or legal guardian of the aggrieved party.
- B. Hearings; Lawyers. The Grievance Committee may, at its discretion, ask for a response from player, coach or other member of the Club and may, in the discretion of the Chair of the Grievance Committee, conduct a hearing. Reasonable notice shall be given to involved parties and those others invited to aid in the Board's deliberations and/or to present relevant information, no less than two business days prior to the scheduled hearing. A Grievance Committee proceeding or hearing is not a legal proceeding or hearing. However, on reasonable prior written notice to the Chair, a party may be assisted in the presentation of the party's case at a hearing, including the assistance of legal counsel, if desired.
- C. Forfeiture of Appeal Rights. An involved party failing to appear before the Grievance Committee after having received proper notice shall forfeit all rights to appeal.
- D. Basis of Decision. The Grievance Committee shall render a decision on any complaint or grievance on the basis of any information, from any source that it deems appropriate under the circumstances.

- E. Conflict of Interest. If a member of the Grievance Committee is connected with the team or with the aggrieved party or a person against whom the complaint or grievance is directed (other than the Executive Board), he/she shall recuse himself or herself from participating in the hearing. In the event of a conflict of interest arising with any member of the Grievance Board, the Club Ombudsman and President may jointly select a substitute member of the Grievance Committee for such matter.
- F. Appeal. Decisions of the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding unless and until overturned under appeal as provided for in these Rules. A decision of the Grievance Committee may be appealed only to the full Executive Board.

3. Deliberations and Decisions.

- A. Confidentiality. All complaints and grievances, and all deliberations of the Grievance Board, shall be kept in strictest confidence by members of the Grievance Board. Hearings of the Grievance Committee shall be closed to the public.
- B. Decisions. Every effort shall be made to respond to complaints and grievances in an expeditious manner under the circumstances. Decisions of the Grievance Committee shall be rendered within one week after the completion of hearings on a matter. All parties to the complaint or grievance and the President of the Club shall be notified in writing of the decision rendered by the Grievance Committee within two weeks after completion of hearings on the matter.
- C. No Retribution. It is the policy of the Club that no coach seek or exact retribution against any player due to the making of any complaint or grievance. Without limiting the preceding sentence, a player's position or playing time shall not be adversely affected because of a complaint or grievance by the player or member of the player's family. Any violations of this policy should be reported to the Club Ombudsman.

4. Appeals

- A. Validity and Eligibility. To be valid and eligible for consideration, each appeal must:
 - (1) Describe in full detail the grounds for the appeal;
 - (2) Be accompanied by three (3) copies of any information to be presented by witnesses and/or supporting documents;
 - (3) Be provided by first class mail and post-marked, as well as (with respect to copies available in electronic form) e-mailed, no later than midnight of the sixth business day after the date of notice of the decision of the Grievance Committee giving rise to the appeal, to the President of the Club at his home, and to the other party or parties;
 - (4) Pertain to a decision rendered by the Grievance Board;

- (5) Be initiated by a party directly affected by the decision under appeal. An affected party, as used throughout this Rule, is defined as a player, coach and/or other member who was a party to the decision under appeal; and
- (6) Include all information necessary to allow a fair and just decision.
- B. Non-Conformance. Appeals not filed within the required time limit, or which have been submitted without written details or without a copy being sent to the opposing party or parties, or otherwise not in full conformity with Rule 4(A) of these Rules, may be rejected without consideration.
- C. Conflict of Interest. If a member of the Executive Board is connected with the team or with the aggrieved party or a person against whom the complaint or grievance is directed (other than the Executive Board), he/she shall recuse himself or herself from participating in the appeal.
- D. Burden. The appellant shall bear the burden of showing that the decision being appealed from is clearly erroneous.
- E. Evidence. No new evidence may be presented on appeal to the Executive Board unless circumstances have materially changed, or new facts are discovered that were unavailable at the time of the original hearing. In such case, the Executive Board may allow that such new evidence be presented to it provided all parties to the appeal have been given notice and are prepared to respond to the materially changed circumstances or previously unavailable or undiscovered facts.
- F. Stay of Grievance Committee Decision. A decision rendered by the Grievance Committee from which an appeal is taken may be suspended by the Executive Board only upon written application by the appellant which accompanies the notice of appeal and the finding by the Officers of the Club of good cause shown. Good cause shown may only be made upon a unanimous vote of the Officers of the Club not having a conflict of interest and a written decision which specifically states that there is a strong likelihood of success upon the appeal and that circumstances are present which clearly show that the appellant will suffer irreparable harm unless the decision from which the appeal is taken is suspended pending the determination of the appeal. The decision of the Officers of the Club regarding suspension of the decision pending determination of the appeal shall be final and may not be further appealed.
- G. Limited Relevancy. No decision of a referee, and no other decision which arises out of the application of the rules of competition which is made in the course of the competition and has no consequence beyond the competition as herein defined, shall be appealable. For the purposes of this policy, the term "competition" may include games, tournaments, league play or a regular season.
- H. Appeal. Decisions of the full Executive Board shall be final and binding, except as an appeal with respect to a player is otherwise required to be granted under the rules USAV or XLRVA.