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OACHING Convention Issue 2017 Volume 34 • Issue 5



Features

Skills and Drills

The Assistant Coaches Committee is one of the hardest-working groups that are involved with the AVCA. Check out this primer on managing practices this season, particularly with regards to making sure each player and position gets adequate reps. Freshen up the practice plan with these helpful tips.

Annual Report

As part of our commitment to serving the volleyball community, the AVCA prepares an Annual Report each year to document our various efforts to Grow the Game. Please take a look and see how we've put the resources at our disposal to work on your behalf. We're proud of the hard work that our volunteer board members put in, and are honored to have the chance to work with people from so many aspects of the sports community.

Two-year College Players to Watch

Once again, it n is our pleasure to showcase some of the best up-and-coming talent in the Two-Year College ranks. We work closely with the TYC coaching community to recognize these outstanding athletes. We're excited to see how their careers continue to progress.

16 **Convention Preview: Kansas City**

Can you believe it's already time to talk about the upcoming AVCA Annual Convention? We can't either. Fortunately, we've already locked in a huge number of expert presenters to speak on a variety of topics. Check out this special section to see what we're offering, get a glimpse at an early schedule, find out what's new and get a feel for our lovely host city.



On the Cover

Kansas City has hosted fantastic AVCA Annual Conventions in the past and 2017 will be no different. We're excited to return with an expanded slate of educational sessions, new attendee benefits designed to enhance your experience and a star-studded slate of presenters. Learn more in our special preview.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



From the Desk of ...

Christy Johnson-Lynch, Iowa State University Head Coach

I RECENTLY PRESENTED at a clinic where each of us were asked to talk about One Big Thing we've learned during our coaching career. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the panel's wide range of answers. It was evident that we all had different ideas about what is most important in coaching. It reminded me yet again that there is no one specific way to be great at our profes-

sion. For every great coach there's an equally great way to train, to relate and to run a program. I decided to take the same question, *what is One Big Thing you have learned in coaching*?, to a cross section of successful DI coaches around the country. I hope you enjoy their answers as much as I did!

Erin Appleman, Yale

I think one of the biggest things I have learned from coaching is patience and being able to adapt. We have all been there – had incredible plans that somehow fell through or didn't go as planned. Thinking on the fly and then being patient with the team are hard to do sometimes, but as I grow as a coach I feel these are two of the best character traits I can give them.

Shawn Garus, Boise State

The one big thing I have learned about coaching is to be versatile. Your roster is always changing and the strength of your team can vary from year to year. I try to keep consistent objectives for my program but be versatile in how we achieve those objectives.

Heather Olmstead, BYU

One big thing that coaching has taught me is that we don't work hard to play volleyball; we play volleyball because it teaches us to work hard. Working hard requires us to have balance in our lives. When we have balance in our lives we start to see all the life lessons we are learning.

Michelle Collier, Georgia Tech

The one big thing I have learned about coaching is that it is ever-changing. I love the fact that every season you have a different group of players, different strengths and weaknesses, etc. It is never monoto-



nous, and I love that part of it because it is constantly pushing you to learn and to adapt in order to get the most out of the people around you.

Ray Gooden, Northern Illinois

What I've learned is that the best coaches are great teachers. They are also really good cultivators of culture.

Brandon Rosenthal, Lipscomb

A coach once told me that seeking advice is great, but no one will ever know your program like you do. In other words, as a head coach you must do everything with confidence, because while others might do it differently it's your decision, so take pride in it. No one will put as much time, energy and thought into the program as you do.

Jen Greeny, Washington State

One of the biggest things I have learned from coaching is that we have to teach our

leaders how to lead. If we want our teams to function in a certain way, we must spend a good amount of time with our leaders educating them on the specifics. The team culture ideals are established by the coaching staff, but the leaders on our teams are the ones who carry it out. If we don't have good leaders that share our vision of team culture, it will be a struggle to create the culture we envision.

Mark Pryor, North Dakota

The one big thing that I have learned is that mindful rest has to be a priority. We always think, "I can watch more film, or I can plan this differently, or we can run this to side out better in Ro 4 ..." it goes on and on. The law of diminishing returns is real. If we do not take time to put down the cell phone, quit checking email,

quit watching film and take time for ourselves to recharge, we will never be as effective as we can be. Sleep deprivation has definitely proven that it slows brain function, affects overall mood and decreases productivity. We demand that our student-athletes take care of themselves. We need to set the example to our student-athletes by showing them that you can recharge daily by actually unplugging. That is a life skill they will definitely need as they begin their careers.

Ching

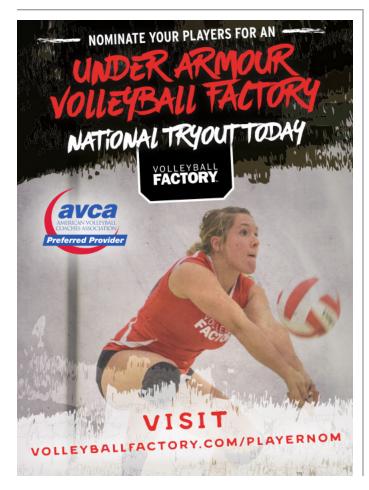


EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Our Game

I WAS AT A CLINIC in Texas listening to Heather Sanders, a 30-something high school coach, give a presentation about training middle blockers to transition. She had put pieces of tape on the floor to provide visual cues, she was specific in her instructions about landing, footwork, balance and weight shift, and she gave her colleagues details about progressions, drills for training and number of repetitions needed to make the movements into habits.

Three times in her presentation she apologized to the 100 coaches in the gym about being an "old-school" coach. She had been asked to share her training techniques because her win-loss record was impressive and her middles effective even when she didn't have size. She asked to be forgiven for her "traditional" view that teaching specific patterns, drilling footwork and enforcing proper mechanics was an effective way to coach. As I listened I asked myself, *When did we as a coaching community decide that teaching fundamentals was anachronistic?*





LONGVIEW ATHLETIC

I can trace where I contributed: as a player, I hated the nitpicking about what I considered irrelevant details and was easily bored by repetitive drilling; and, as a college coach, I wasn't very good at teaching skills and could recruit my way to success. These factors made me an eager and early adopter of "the wash drill fixes everything" style of coaching.

It was during our development of the avcaVPI[™], a tool for assessing and comparing the athleticism of volleyball players, that I saw firsthand the impact of "the game teaches the game" philosophy of coaching. Part of the testing is to assess the height at which a player can hit the ball in a downward trajectory and measure the velocity of that swing. To standardize the metric and isolate the attack mechanics, we eliminate the setter and timing issues by having players hit a suspended ball wearing a tracking glove that gauges swing velocity. We video the approach and swing, and compare the results with the 900 college players we have tested.

Watching thousands of prospect-age players with four to six years of training has shaken my faith in the effectiveness of our collective efforts at coaching education. A frightfully high number lack proper mechanics. I'm not talking about their height of attack or swing speed; these measures of athleticism will vary widely in any population of players. What is missing are the "taught" aspects of the attack: approach footwork, coordination of arms and legs to maximize the jump, opening of the body to set up the swing, shoulder rotation, elbow location and hand position.

I understand that we can't make a player more athletic, but it's our job to give them a chance to be as good as they can be, given their physical attributes. Have we sabotaged our own sport by dismissing as archaic the drilling of proper movement patterns?

Other factors have contributed to my crisis of confidence in our methods: International coaches, many of whom have far more

coaching-specific education than we require, are confused by our obsession with multi-contact progressions, our fascination with randomized, teammate-dependent training and our love of "wash drills" as a means to skill acquisition. Canadian, Dutch, Japanese, Brazilian, Chinese, Italian and Polish coaches who visit our convention note the inefficiency of this approach and question the lack of habit-forming repetitions necessary to teach biomechanically sound movements.

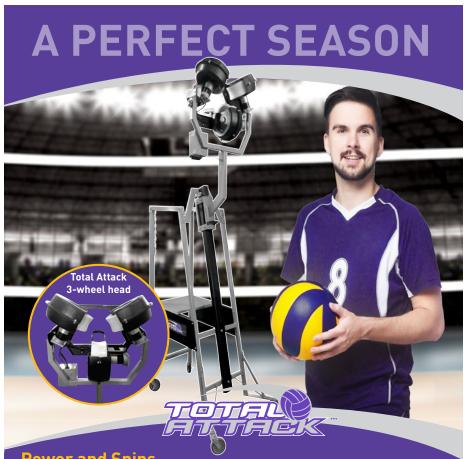
My interactions with countless youth coaches confirms that they too chafe at the game-teaches-the-game methods. They tell me they can't fix a goofy-footer with a pass-set-hit drill, or teach a proper arm swing by having players hit lots of irregularly set balls.

Is it time for us to rethink what we are doing? The ratio of practice to play has flipped in the last 20 years. Training time is now scarce and precious while competition is plentiful and routine. Players are getting plenty of "game-like" repetitions because they are in matches all the time. What they are not getting is technique-specific training in their limited practice hours.

As we start a new volleyball year and put the schedule together for our 2017 Convention, we are going to be more intentional about this matter. In Kansas City, Mike Hebert will show us how to recognize and correct common attack errors. Heather Olmstead will teach us how to get more balls to our middles in outof-system situations, and Avital Selinger, the brilliant Dutch coach, will instruct us on the specifics of training setters and the details of defense. All these presentations are designed to improve our teaching, to make us experts at discerning what a player is doing incorrectly and identify the feedback and type of repetitions that will fix it.

To address where we are with coaching education we must take responsibility for creating our own mess. We have raised a whole generation of coaches who move from competing in drills while on college teams to running drills with their beginning players on middle school and club teams, players who have no proper patterns or ingrained mechanics. These coaches can't recruit their way past their lack of knowledge, and we are not teaching them how to train basic skills.

We can do better and owe it to the next generation of players. Let's take ownership of who teaches the game: We do!



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SKILLS AND DRILLS

Positional Training

by Billy Ebel, Associate Head Coach - Lipscomb University

AS COACHES we continue to maximize our limited criteria for practices. As teams are starting or ending spring/fall training, coaches have to focus a lot on positional training. We spend the first few weeks in 30-minute sessions by position, four days a week. In one of the positional sessions we would split them up individually, and for the second 30-minute session we would do combined small group training. I am going to walk you through certain drills by position that will maximize your training during the season.

Setters

We spend a lot of time one-on-one with our setters. I feel positional training with setters is extremely important. I have heard this from one of my mentors: "We are only as good as our setter." That has a lot of truth; we want to challenge our setters to be the best on the court. If you have a team of great attackers and an average setter, you may struggle more often than not. If you have average attackers and a great setter, I would take that team over the other. When we train our setters, we continue to train game-like situations. We spend a lot of time on speed of our hands, location and footwork. We warm up with a drill called "Self Toss." I want our setters to enter in from any serve receive rotation, they toss their ball to target, get squared up, set to self and then jump set the "Go" or any other set by coach discretion. I am looking for them to be in a neutral position, high hands and good energy through the ball on the release. We use this drill often to get them to focus on footwork and hand positioning. We would then move to setting off a pass – I find it so much more beneficial setting off a pass. We like to focus on reading the passer's arms and anticipating the tempo and angle of the pass. We would have the pass coming from different locations on the court; we call this drill "Around the World." We start a lot in system and gradually move to out of system. We continue to push our setters to the limit;





we challenge them in this drill to drive off one foot and to constantly square up to target. We want a strong sense of fluidity with their feet and hands. This drill can really improve a setter's depth perception and understanding where they set up on the court. Keep challenging your setters to get as many reps as possible outside of practice.

Middles

We can all agree middles have it the toughest when it comes to positional training, especially when your numbers are low in the spring. We continue to stress with our middles three important skills: blocking, transition and attacking versatility. We begin a lot of the positional training with footwork for blocking and transition. We believe that muscle memory plays a large factor when it comes to middles and transition. When we start the positional with blocking, we focus on independent hands. We would start with a "Block Progression." This begins with footwork to either pin. We use pole pads on the ground to get our players to take a big first step and to cover some ground. We would then add coaches on boxes, positioned at either pin, holding two flat balls. We want our middles to focus on clearing the pole pad with the correct footwork and using their arms to swing block up and grab both the deflated volleyballs. We stress the importance of this with our pin hitters as well. As we progress, we would add live attacked balls. We would love to have our middles block with independent hands - we focus on one shot at a time and having them take away that space with one hand. As we continue, we would then go into a full swing blocking movement and maybe even add a setter for them to read. The next drill we use quite often is "Two Ball Training." We would position the middles in serve receive patterns; we would ask them to run two different sets back to back. If the middles are starting in rotation 3, we would ask them to run a slide and then come back around to a push. You can either toss these



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AVCA Members receive 30% OFF Use Promo code: AVCAMEM17 Exclusively on badensports.com balls or have a setter work on her connection with the middles. We challenge our middles to be up quick and to work on different shots.

Outsides/Right Sides

When we are training our pins hitters we are constantly talking about three areas of skills: first ball contact, attacking and defense. When we are going through training we always begin with "Passing School." We start by doing a passing progression on boxes - we have the girls sit on the boxes, and we stress the importance of angles and dropping your shoulder to get the ball to target. We like to do this stationary to give them more direct feedback instantly. We position the boxes on different areas on the court to give them a better look at the angles and challenge them to pass tough balls to target. We would start on the boxes and then move to stationary passing with no boxes. We start to move them from side to side off a coach toss to get them passing the ball along their midline. We slowly work towards going to a live serve to get them tons of reps off a serve receive and put the focus on certain situations. One day we would work on scheme balls, and the next would be short balls. We try to give them plenty of variation to make sure they see an abundance of different serves. We would then move to attacking



or defense at this point. For the attacking segment of practice, we really stress ball control and hand contact. We want our players to have the ability to hit any kind of set and also have the ability to adjust to different types of balls. We work on this skill by doing a drill called "**OOS**" (Out of System). We would have a player in middle back, and coaches would attack balls to the defensive player, who would then dig to self then set one of the pins hitters. We challenge our attackers to be disciplined and able to adjust to a non-setter second contact. We would then push our outsides and right sides to make certain shots on the court. We have seen a lot of progress with this drill, especially since a lot of volleyball is out of system.

Liberos

One of the most valued positions on the court would have to be the libero position. It is so important to have a well-rounded player at this position. I love to push these players to the absolute limit. We begin a lot of our individual sessions with defense and floor moves. Our players always know when I send out the text "Bring sweats" that it is going to be one of those days. We have a drill called "Cone Series." I position the cones in left, middle and right back; we have two shuffle cones and a sprint cone. We begin shuffling left to right once, and they immediately sprint forward on a read ball and go for a forward sprawl. I want our liberos to get comfortable getting on the ground but also have the knowledge of when to use these skills. I would add a ball to the forward sprawl ball and push the limit as to how far they can go to get it. I was pleasantly surprised as to how quickly our players got over the fear of diving on the ground. I want our liberos to be super dynamic on defense and have the ability to cover a lot of ground. The next defensive drill we use for our liberos would be "Two Ball Dig." We start by positioning boxes in left, right and middle front on the opposite side of the net. Coachinitiated, the first ball goes directly to the player in any of the three positions; after that first ball is dug, there is an immediate second ball that is some sort of run through or chase ball. I want to emphasize this idea of being able to change direction but also having the ability to think fast and react to the ball. We would stay in this drill for up to a minute for each player and all of them going through up to five times. I love challenging our defensive players to push the limit every day. We make a lot of plays in our gym, and I feel these types of drills directly impact our defensive success.

Positional training can be really beneficial to a team's success. We emphasize the importance of spring/summer and tell our players that this is where we decide if we want to win another championship. Whether practice is 30 minutes or three hours, maximize your training by challenging your players to get better at their position and to take responsibility for improving each day. Continue to push your players to get 1% better every practice, but remember that, as coaches, we have the ability to push our teams to the next level with an efficient practice or positional training.

For more drills and resources, visit www.avca.org!



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2017 SCHEDULE

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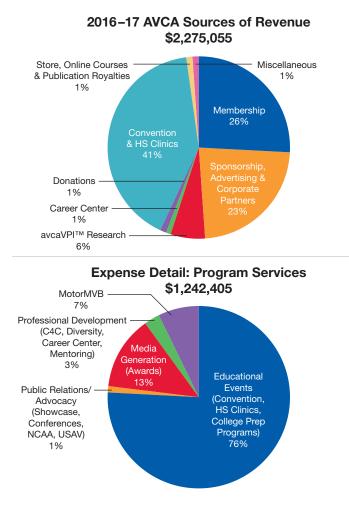
AVCA finished the fiscal year of 2016–17 on June 30. Per the directive of the Board of Directors, the following is an Annual Report designed to inform the membership of the sources of association revenues and the expenses allocated to various programmatic areas.

FINANCIALS

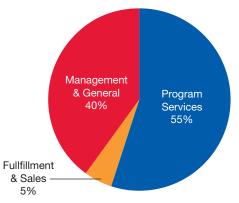
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For the fiscal year 2016-17, expenses on programs and services totaled \$2,259,918; revenue collected was \$2,275,055. For purposes of timeliness, the financial data shared in this report is from unaudited statements. A copy of the audited financial statements will be available by November of 2017.

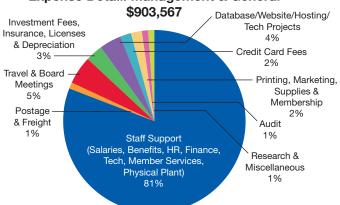
	et, June 30, 2017	
Assets		
	Cash	706,010
	Investments	1,533,593
	Accounts Receivable	105,004
	Prepaid Expenses	27,610
	Inventory & Equipment	108,368
	Less Depreciation	(80,148)
Total Assets		2,400,437
Liabilites		
	Payables	52,617
	Deferrals	221,607
Equity		2,126,213
Total Liabilities & Equity		2,400,437



2016–17 Expenses by Category \$2,258,918



Expense Detail: Management & General



IMPACTS

Outreach

- **MotorMVB:** The AVCA Board of Directors approved a \$150,000 contribution to the MotorMVB Foundation, a non-profit created to drive growth in men's and boys' volleyball. Contributions will be made during the 2017-2020 quadrennium and will support efforts to identify and encourage colleges and universities to add varsity men's teams that provide scholarships in men's volleyball.
- Side-Out Foundation Dig Pink: 2016 Side-Out Foundation - \$1,538,568 - 867 events
 *2016 Dig Pink Participants and AVCA Team Academic Award winners raised \$91,671 for the Side-Out Foundation
- 771 AVCA Team Academic Award Winners, 81 of these hosted Dig Pink events.
- Engagement
- Inaugural AVCA Collegiate Beach Conference was held in conjunction with the 2017 NCAA Collegiate Beach Championship in Gulf Shores, Alabama.
- Inaugural AVCA Boys' Showcase at the 2016 AVCA Convention in Columbus.
- Men's Coaching Education Track featured at the 2016 AVCA Convention in Columbus.
- The AVCA partnered with SoloStats LIVE to provide live stats for USA Men's and Women's National Indoor Teams during the 2016 Olympics. The type of statistical analysis you're accustomed to seeing for your own team – in real time!
- Partnered with the Alabama high school volleyball coaching community to start the Alabama High School Volleyball Coaches Association (AHSVCA), the AVCA's fourth Signature Affiliate state association.

• Webinar Coaching Education: Registered: 845; Purchased Recording: 36 = 881 coaches served

- Partnered with the NCAA on the first-ever 2017 Minority Coaches Champions Forum for Volleyball hosted at the University of Virginia. Nine rising ethnic minority female volleyball coaches were selected for 2½ days of intense professional development programming designed to give them a realistic view of the role and preparation it takes to become a head coach in the college game.
- Supported the latest phase of a multi-year research study led by Calvin College head coach Dr. Amber Warners on the utilization of new technologies to enhance communication between coaches and players.

- In the Sand: Spring and summer conversations with beach coaches were punctuated with requests for more regular communication and outreach on issues related to beach volleyball. In response, we have added this e-newsletter. It will be monthly during the off-season and bi-weekly in the spring. We are also scheduling more meetings for beach coaches to discuss specific issues – NCAA rules, format – at the Convention.
- Completed the AVCA Broadcast Manual.
- 2016 AVCA Convention attendance in Columbus, OH: 2,722 (Omaha: 2,259; Oklahoma City: 2,286; Seattle: 2,172)
 *Largest AVCA Convention ever; beating Louisville's 2,620 attendees
- New Corporate Partners signed this past fiscal year:
 TeamSnap
 VolleyMetrics
- New Preferred Provider signed this past fiscal year: Volleywrite
- The United States Marine Corps signed on as title sponsor of 11 coach of the year awards presented at the 2016 AVCA Convention in Columbus.

2016 - 17 ANNUAL REPORT

IMPACTS CONTINUED Recognition

• 2,105 Player Awards

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- 342 Coach Awards
- 773 Team Awards
- 67 Media Awards
- 3 Hall of Fame Awards
- Club Awards: The American Volleyball Coaches Association annually honors deserving college and high school coaches through its Regional and National Coach of the Year and Victory Club programs. In 2016, AVCA launched the Club Awards program to honor and recognize 10 deserving coaches in the youth/club volleyball community. AVCA Club Awards Committee will select a Club Coach of the Year in each of the seven girls' age divisions (12-18), a Beach Club Coach of the Year, a Boys Club Coach of the Year and a Club Director of the Year.



- 2016 **Team Academic Awards** recognized 771 teams (a record). The 2017 award will likewise set a new record.
- Affiliate Partner Team Academic: In 2017, in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the award, AVCA is launching the AVCA Team Academic Affiliate Collaborative to better assist state coaching associations in recognizing outstanding academic achievement by volleyball teams within their state. For official AVCA Signature Affiliates and AVCA Affiliate Partners, AVCA provided each state association with AVCA-managed resources including nomination, membership and evaluation tools in order to produce each state affiliate's final Team Academic Award achievers.

Milestones

• AVCA total membership reached an all-time high of over 7,400 members in December of 2016.



- A big number on social media; we surpassed 3 million total views on the AVCA YouTube channel. We also surpassed 10,000 Instagram followers (128% increase) and 30,000 Twitter followers. On Facebook, the AVCA page has over 130,000 followers.
- The NCAA Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship final drew 8,250 fans and combined with the 6,000+ crowd on Thursday night achieved the largest two-day total in event history.
- The NCAA Collegiate Beach Championship drew a record 6,268 fans. Volleyball fans got to binge-watch as the weekend offered 4 hours of men's VB on Thursday, 3 of beach on Friday, 3 of beach and 2 of men's VB on Saturday and 2 of beach on Sunday – a record number of hours of live VB coverage for a spring weekend!

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AVCA TYC PLAYERS TO WATCH

The AVCA is pleased to reveal the 2017 Two-year College Players to Watch list. All of the players recognized below are competing as sophomores during the 2017 season. As the season kicks off, keep an eye out for these exciting athletes. Each has been recognized not only for the quality of their kills, but also because each player stands out as a leader and quality addition to their team.

CCCAA



Shari Volpis Los Angeles Pierce College Head Coach: Nabil Mardini Position: Outside Hitter

Recorded 316 Kills on 657 Attempts. Averages .51 Aces per Set. "Arguably, Shari is the best athlete and best attacker

on our team. She can hit on the left and on the right. Very humble, sweet, but yet a fierce competitor. She possesses a modest attitude and always looking to come to practice and get better. We also developed her jump serve and it became a point score serve midway through the season."



Brianna Souza Butte Community College Head Coach: David Davis Position: Middle Hitter

Averages 3.62 Kills per Set and hits at a .355 clip. "Brianna was a first team All Golden Valley Conference Selection in 2016 (her

freshman season). She was voted team MVP and was an instrumental part of helping Butte College win its first Golden Valley Conference Championship since 2009.



Makayla Cervantes Fresno City College Head Coach: Kieran Roblee Position: Outside Hitter

Recorded 3.03 Digs per Set and was responsible for 2.6 Points per Set last season. "Makayla was instrumental with us achiev-

ing the California State Championship and was selected to the all-tournament team. We only dropped 9 sets in a 30-1 season record, so the stats may have been a tad different if we had played more sets. She is an unassuming OH with her strong prowess on the first contact ball – she keeps us in system. She has a tremendous read on the game and that allows her to achieve excellence."

NWAC



Montanna Gubrud Linn Benton

Community College Head Coach: Jayme Frazier Position: Setter

Chalked up 10.92 Assists per Set and 54 Aces last season. "Montanna was exactly the

spark this team needed as she is athletic, relentless, demanding and energetic. She locates well, makes quick decisions about delivery to hitters based on block/defense and is very versatile in her skills. She is a positive teammate and a cornerstone for our success this year and will continue to be into her playing career.



Nina Bailey Lower Columbia College

Head Coach: Carri Smith Position: Middle Hitter Recorded 102 blocks last sea-

son while swinging at a .288 percentage. She was voted Most Inspirational for the 2016 NWAC

Championship Tournament and was in the top 3 for total blocks in the NWAC. She will be a captain for LCC volleyball in 2017. "Nina is very outgoing and a fun player who loves to dance and keep things lively! You are never bored when Nina is around."

NJCAA DI



Massiel Matos Miami Dade College Head Coach: Origenes Benoit Position: OH/RS

Notched 4.72 Kills per Set while swinging at a .366 percentage. "Matos is an international business major at Miami

Dade College and a member of the 20-and-under Dominican Republic National Volleyball team. She played for the 2015 20-and-under volleyball world champions. Also, in 2016 her team won the 20-andunder Norceca championship where she was named best server and best opposite. Her favorite quote is "no pain no gain." Her dream is to play at the Olympics representing the Dominican Republic."



Caitlyn Cooper Iowa Western Community College Head Coach: Alicia Williams Position: Outside Hitter

Notched 3.74 Kills per Set while also recording 2.98 Digs per Set. "Caitlyn is committed to play

at the University of Kentucky after her time at Iowa Western. She is a Houston, TX, native. She is a positive, fun person! She is interested in physical therapy after graduating here with her AA in general studies."

NJCAA DII

Bailey O'Brien Sauk Valley Community College Head Coach: Jay Howell Position: Outside Hitter

Averaged 4.62 Kills per Set while also swinging at a .347 clip, as well as notching 589 Digs. "Bailey was a four-year varsity volleyball performer at Rock Falls High School in Rock Falls, where she became the career leader in kills and garnered multiple all-conference, all-area and all-state accolades."



Daniela Santos

Coffeyville Community College Head Coach: Delice Downing Position: OH/Libero

Chalked up 4.46 Digs per Set while also recording 2.97 Kills per Set. "Dani has a heart of gold and is a fun young woman to be

around! She is a great athlete and can play multiple sports. Everyone on campus loves Dani! She is a jokester and will do what she can to make you laugh and relax! Being from Venezuela, she loves being in the US. Dani has maintained a 4.0 GPA and is being inducted into our Phi Theta Kappa.

NJCAA DIII



SallyAnne Rudny Jamestown Community College Head Coach: Ashley Lund Position: Outside Hitter

Recorded 5.35 Kills per Set last season while also notching 83 Aces. "Sally is a criminal justice

major and hopes to pursue a job in criminal investigation when she finishes at a four-year university. Along with her passion for volleyball, she also enjoys playing basketball and softball. As a freshman she received NJCAA Region 3 Division 3 Player of the Year, WNYAC Player of the year, NJCAA First team All-American, 1st Team Region 3 Division 3, and NJCAA Region 3 Division 3 All-Tournament Team awards."



Sarah Udoni Harper College Head Coach: Bob Vilsoet Position: Middle Hitter

2016: Totaled 271 kills, averaged 1.99 kills/set and posted a season-high 14 kills. She hit .263 efficiency for the year. Also

for the season totaled 73 solo blocks and 47 block assists for total 96.5 blocks. She was named All Conference 2nd team, All-Region second team, as well as the All-National Tournament MVP.





VOLLEYBALL IS MAKING AN IMPACT!

Thousands of volleyball players, coaches and fans support The Side-Out Foundation each year to fund game-changing stage IV breast cancer research through Dig Pink[®]. If your team is not already supporting Side-Out this season, it's not too late!

WAYS TO SUPPORT

- Create a team fundraising campaign
- Make an individual donation
- Purchase gear from Shop Dig Pink®

Visit **AVCA.SIDE-OUT.ORG** to learn how you can be a part of the impact our sport is making!

AVCA PARTICIPATION AWARDS

Grand Prize Winners (2)

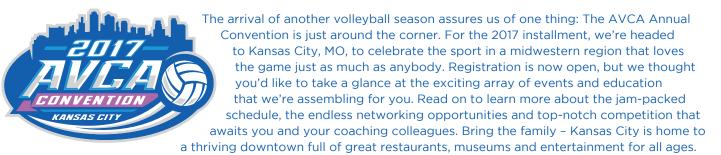
Free AVCA Convention registration, airfare, and NCAA Championship match tickets!

Free AVCA Coaches Membership(s) for hosting a Dig Pink[®] match.



Let's unite our sport and change the way cancer is forever treated!

BECAUSE NOBODY PLAYS TO LOSE.



It won't just be coaching talent that gathers in KC this December; the Under Armour All-American Match & Skills Competition is back, along with showcases featuring top high school girls' and boys' athletes. We're also ramping up the selection of beach and men's educational offerings. Centered around the 2017 NCAA Championship, this is the one volleyball event that has something for everyone. Head to **www.avcaconvention.org** for all the details.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Tuesday, December 12

4pm - 7pm AVCA Registration

Wednesday, December 13

Wednesday, De	ecember 13	
9am - 9pm	AVCA Registration	KCCC Lobby 2300
9:30am - 5:30pm	AVCA Diversity Awards Workshop	KCCC 2505AB
10 - 11:30am	NCAA Semifinal Team A - Open Practice	Sprint Center
11am - 7pm	Regiception - Meet up with old friends and network over a beverage at AVCA Registration	KCCC Lobby 2300
11:35am- 1:05pm	NCAA Semifinal Team B - Open Practice	Sprint Center
1 - 4pm	Pre-Convention Seminar: Preparing Your Setter to Play at Peak Performance - Coaching Strategies for Skill Development and Mental Sharpness - Avital Selinger	KCCC 2502AB
1:20 – 2:50pm	NCAA Semifinal Team C - Open Practice	Sprint Center
2:45 - 4:15pm	Division I Head Coaches Committee Meeting	KCCC 2211
2:55 - 4:25pm	NCAA Semifinal Team D - Open Practice	Sprint Center
4:30 - 7:30pm	NCAA Division I Conference Meetings	Various meeting rooms
5 – 6pm	AVCA Match Point Reception (formerly known as AVCA Mentoring Program Reception)	KCCC 2215B
5:15 - 6:15pm	AVCA Convention First-time Attendee Reception	KCCC 2215A
5:30 - 7:30pm	Volleyball Business Exchange AVCA Education Session	KCCC 2215C
6 - 7:30pm	Opening Session: Coaching Evolution - Growing, Learning and Improving as a Coach and Leader - John Dunning *Open to all attendees with a pre-con/full or full registration package)	KCCC 2502AB
6 - 8pm	AVCA Diversity Awards Workshop	KCCC Exhibit Hall D
7 - 8:30pm	NAIA Social Event	KCCC 2215B
7:30 - 8:30pm	Thirty Under 30 Award Winner Reception (by invitation only)	KCCC 2215A
	FCA/AIA Coaches Connection	Marriott Mary Lou Williams AB
8 – 11pm	Spalding Convention Kickoff Party - featuring casino night	Marriott Basie Ballroom
['hursday, Dece 6:15 - 7:15am	Rise & Shine Sweatworking: Bootcamp Fitness Class (class is complimentary for AVCA Convention attendees)	Marriott Bennie Moten AB
7:30 - 8:15am	Men's NAIA - VCA Coaches General Meeting	KCCC 2503AB
7:30 - 8:45am	Continental Breakfast Buffet	KCCC Outside General Meeting Rooms
8:15 - 10:15am	Division II Coaches General Meeting Division III Coaches General Meeting NAIA - VCA Coaches General Meeting Two-Year College Coaches General Meeting	КССС 2504АВ КССС 2505АВ КССС 2503АВ КССС 2215В
8:30 - 10am	International Coaches Networking Breakfast & Orientation	KCCC 2208
8:45 - 10:15am	Division I Coaches General Meeting Club Coaches General Meeting (presented by Spalding) High School Coaches General Meeting (presented by Sports Attack)	KCCC 2502AB KCCC 2215A KCCC 2215C
10am - Noon	AVCA Volleyball Marketplace & Silent Auction	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
10am – Noon	AVCA Coaches Zone - presented by The Art of Coaching Volleyball (includes complimentary massage, phone charging stations and lounge area)	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
10:30 - 11:30am	AVCA Educational Sessions	
11:45 - 12:45pm	AVCA Educational Sessions Classroom Session (presented by Jostens) - TBD	КССС 2505АВ
Noon – 2pm	Jostens Coaches Honors Luncheon	KCCC Great Hall 3501
12:15 - 1:15pm	Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) Meeting	KCCC 2203
1 – 2pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
2 - 5pm	AVCA Volleyball Marketplace & Silent Auction	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
2 - 5pm	AVCA Coaches Zone – presented by The Art of Coaching Volleyball (includes complimentary massage, phone charging stations and lounge area)	KCCC Exhibit Hall E

Career Center - Exhibit Hall E

KCCC Lobby 2300

Career Counseling: Megan Kahn (sports industry specific career topics)

2 - 4pm

Raise your game Dec. 13–17 in Kansas City.

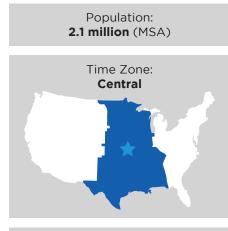
2 - 5pm	Career Counseling: Karen Silins	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
2:15 - 4:45pm	(resume writing/critique and general career development topics) Career Counseling: Garry Rosenfield (legal and contract negotiation topics)	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
		Career Center – Exhibit Hall E
:30 - 3pm	Roundtable Session: Dream Job - Get It or Live It - Megan Kahn	KCCC 2209
:30 - 3:30pm :30 - 3:30pm	Diversity Development Team Meeting AVCA Educational Sessions	KCCC 2209
:45 - 4:45pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	KCCC 2202
:45 - 4:45pm	Coaching Camp with John Speraw (by invitation only)	KCCC 2202
:45 - 5:45pm	AVCA Semifinal Matches Tailgate Party	Marriott Basie Ballroom
BD	NCAA Semifinal Match #1 (NCAA match ticket required)	Sprint Center
[BD	NCAA Semifinal Match #2 (NCAA match ticket required)	Sprint Center
riday, Decemb	er 15	
':30 - 8:30am	Fellowship of Christian Athletes Breakfast	Marriott Andy Kirk AB
:45am- 7:30pm	AVCA Registration	KCCC Lobby 2300
- 8:30am	Victory Club Award Winner Check-in	Marriott Basie Ballroom Foyer
:15 - 8:45am	Continental Breakfast Buffet - continental breakfast buffet open to all attendees with full registration or pre-convention and full registration package	Marriott Basie Ballroom Foyer
3:30 - 10:15am	AVCA Super Session and Victory Club Recognition AVCA Educational Session	
8:30 - 10:30am	Knowing Yourself and Knowing Your Players: Scouting All Phases of the Game - Marcio Sicoli	KCCC 2503AB
8:45 - 10:15am	Regiception - Meet up with old friends and network over a beverage at AVCA Registration	KCCC Lobby 2300
am - 12:30pm	JVA Beach Committee Meeting	KCCC 2208
):30am	Weekend Registration Package Begins - does not include AVCA All-America/Players of the Year B	anquet
):30 - 11:30am	AVCA Educational Sessions - open to Weekend Registration attendees only	
):45 -12:45pm	AVCA All-America/Players of the Year Banquet	KCCC Great Hall 3501
1:45 – 12:45pm	AVCA Educational Sessions - open to Weekend Registration attendees only	
2:45 - 7:30pm	AVCA Volleyball Marketplace & Silent Auction	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
2:45 - 7:30pm	AVCA Coaches Zone - presented by The Art of Coaching Volleyball	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
15 - 3:15pm	Career Counseling: Garry Rosenfield (legal and contract negotiation topics)	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
15 - 7:15pm	Career Counseling: Karen Silins (resume writing/critique and general career development topics)	Career Center – Exhibit Hall E
15 - 2:15pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
15 - 2:15pm	Coaching Camp with TBD (by invitation only)	KCCC 2209
2:15 - 2:30pm	Sports Imports Challenge	Mateflex Court 1 - Exhibit Hall E
::30 - 3:30pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
::30 - 3:30pm	Coaching Camp with John Dunning (by invitation only)	KCCC 2209
3:30 - 3:45pm	Baden Challenge	Mateflex Court 1 - Exhibit Hall E
5:45 - 5:15pm	Career Counseling: Megan Kahn (sports industry specific career topics)	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
3:45 - 4:45pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	KCCC 2200
3:45 - 4:45pm	Coaching Camp with TBD (by invitation only)	KCCC 2209
3:45 - 4:45pm	AAU Beach Volleyball Tournament Directors Meeting	KCCC 2210
5 - 7:30pm 3 - 10pm	AVCA Friday Night Party & Coaches Tournament Under Armour® All-America Volleyball Match & Skills Competition	KCCC Exhibit Hall E Sprint Center
		Sprint Center
aturday, Decei		
5:30 - 7:30am	Rise & Shine Sweatworking: Bootcamp Fitness Class	Marriott Bennie Moten AB
3am - 12:30pm	AVCA Registration	KCCC Lobby 2300
8:30 - 9:30am	Continental Breakfast Buffet	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
8:30am -12:30pm	AVCA Volleyball Marketplace	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
3:30am - 12:30pm	AVCA Coaches Zone - presented by The Art of Coaching Volleyball	KCCC Exhibit Hall E
) – 10am	AVCA Educational Sessions	
) – 10am	Coaching Camp with TBD (by invitation only)	KCCC 2211
9:30 - 11:30am	Rox Volleyball Bloody Mary Happy Hours	Exhibit Hall E - Rox Volleyball Booth #TBD
0:15 - 10:45am	Roundtable Session: Finding Balance in Your Work-Life – Megan Kahn	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
0:15 - 12:15pm	Career Counseling: Megan Kahn (sports industry specific career topics)	Career Center - Exhibit Hall E
0:15 - 11:15am	AVCA Educational Sessions	
1:15 - 11:30am	AVCA Scavenger Hunt Drawing	Mateflex Court 1 - Exhibit Hall E
1:30am – Noon	Roundtable Session: Title TBD - Karen Silins	Career Center – Exhibit Hall E
1:30am-12:30pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
2:45 - 1:45pm	AVCA Exhibitor Showcase Sessions	
2:45 - 2:45pm	JVA General Meeting (open to all club coaches)	KCCC 2215B
- 3pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
- 3:15pm	AVCA Educational Session	
0.100111	USAV SafeSport Certification Course (presented by USA Volleyball) – TBD	KCCC 2503AB
- 3:30pm	Boys' Talent Showcase	KCCC Exhibit Hall D
:15 - 4:15pm	AVCA Educational Sessions	
:30 - 6pm	NCAA Kid's Clinic	KCCC Exhibit Hall D
4:30 - 6pm	AVCA Champions Party – separate ticket required	Leinenkugel's - KC Power & Light District
BD	NCAA Championship Match (NCAA match ticket required)	Sprint Center
unday, Decem		
am - Noon	Coaches Check-in	Outside KCCC Exhibit Hall D
	NCSA/AVCA Talent Showcase - Wave 1	KCCC Exhibit Hall D
8:30 - 10am 10 - 11:30am	NCSA/AVCA Talent Showcase - Wave 2 NCSA/AVCA Talent Showcase - Wave 3	KCCC Exhibit Hall D

KCCC = Kansas City Convention Center



CONVENTION SCENE

KANSAS CITY BASICS



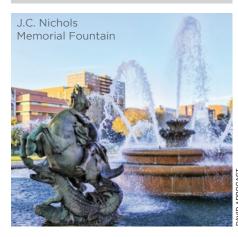
Average Age: 36.2

Average Yearly Rainfall: **39**"

Airport: Kansas City International Airport **(MCI)**







What's New

The AVCA Convention is better than ever before with several new activities and enhancements awaiting you in Kansas City.

More Small Group Interaction

The AVCA Convention is the largest gathering of volleyball coaches in the world bringing together a mix of Hall of Famers to first-year assistant coaches. What makes the convention a unique experience is being part of a large event while still being able to network and share ideas within smaller individual volleyball communities. The convention schedule includes several new or enhanced small group events this year including Regiception (new event at registration giving coaches another opportunity to network with each other), Thirty Under 30 Award Reception, International Coaches Networking Breakfast, First-Time Attendee Reception and the Match Point Reception. In addition, the convention schedule includes educational sessions and meetings targeted at high school, club, each college division, men's/boy's and beach to provide opportunities for learning and networking within your peer groups.

Coaching Camps

Did you ever wish you could spend an hour asking questions and picking the brain of one of the top coaches in the sport? Coaching Camps have been added to the schedule in Kansas City to provide an opportunity for small group discussion and learning. Some of the best coaches in volleyball have volunteered their time to meet with small groups of coaches in an informal setting to answer questions and talk shop.

Advanced Beach Coaches Training

As beach volleyball continues to grow the need for advanced coaches training becomes more important to keep the sport moving forward. Three-time Olympic coach and current Pepperdine Assistant Beach Coach Marcio Sicoli is part of the convention schedule and he will offer 10 hours of advanced training for beach coaches. Coaches who attend all 10 hours will earn a certificate of completion.

Pre-Convention Seminar: Preparing Your Setter to Play at Peak Performance – Coaching Strategies for Skill Development and Mental Sharpness (KCCC 2502AB)

Wednesday, December 13, 1 - 4pm

Featured Speaker:

Avital Selinger, Former Olympian and Netherlands Women's Team Head Coach

Join Avital Selinger, two time Olympian and former coach of the Netherlands Women's National Team, for a three-hour intensive look at setting. In this session Selinger will break down the technique and skills required to be an elite setter as well as provide insight into the mental aspects of the position. Avital will share his vision for the setter's footwork in defense and blocking. He will also dive into the creation of attacking combinations and the sequence of vision a setter needs to see the ball, attackers, block and opponent's defense. Coaches from every level will leave this presentation with a better understanding of how to train and get the most out of their team's setter.

You bring out the best in your players. We bring out the best in you.

Men's/Boys' Education Track and Programming

Again this year the AVCA Convention schedule will include an education track targeted specifically for coaches of men's and boy's teams. Both on-court and classroom sessions will be offered led by some of the top coaches in the men's game.

In addition to the educational sessions you won't want to miss the Men's Coaches General Meeting on Friday afternoon and the Boy's Talent Showcase on Saturday afternoon. The Boy's Talent Showcase offers a recruiting event developed for men's team college coaches attending the AVCA Convention. The event is open to uncommitted and unsigned high school and two-year college players.

Please see the schedule below for the men's/boy's program at the convention:

Thursday, Dec. 14

- Title TBD (classroom) TBD (10:30 11:30am)
- Title TBD (court) John Speraw (2:30 3:30pm)
- Tools and Strategies to Help Coaches Reach Their Fundraising Goals (classroom) – Wade Garard (3:45 – 4:45pm)

Friday, Dec. 15

- Men's Coaches General Meeting (1 2:15pm)
- Title TBD (classroom) TBD (2:30 3:30pm)
- Title TBD (classroom) TBD (3:45 4:45pm)

Saturday, Dec. 16

- Steps for Building a Successful Boy's Program (classroom) – Kenny Rogers (9 – 10am)
- Title TBD (classroom) TBD (10:15 11:15am)
- Growing the Game: How to Start a Boy's Youth Program and Increase Participation (court) – Matthew Snyder (11:30am – 12:30pm)
- Boys' Talent Showcase (2 3:30pm)

Promoting You School, Your Players and Your Team: The Role of the Head Coach in Marketing Their Volleyball Program*

(KCCC 2502AB) Thursday, December 14, 10:30 – 11:30am Suggested Audience/Level: All – Intermediate

Featured Speaker:

Cathy George, Michigan State University Head Women's Coach

Michigan State Head Coach for the past 13 seasons, Cathy George, is a leader in marketing her volleyball program.

Throughout her tenure at Western Michigan and now Michigan State, George has realized the importance of the head coach taking an active role generating support and recognition for their programs. She will share what she has learned about growing your fan base, why it is important and how to get it going. Everything starts with us!

Where Do We Go From Here? A Discussion of Recruiting Issues in the College Game* – presented by AVCA Recruiting Task Force

(KCCC 2505AB) Thursday, December 14, 10:30 – 11:30am Suggested Audience/Level: College – Intermediate

Featured Speaker: Jill Wilson, Virginia Tech (Moderator) Denise Corlett, Stanford University Billy Ebel, Lipscomb University

Training the Mechanics of Attacking: Drill for Improving Player Technique and Skill**

(Mateflex Court 2) Thursday, December 14, 10:30 – 11:30am Suggested Audience/Level: All – Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Penny Lucas-White**, Alabama State University Head Coach

The Evolution of Defensive Techniques and Their Relationship with the New Block/ Defense Systems**

(Mateflex Court 2) Thursday, December 14,2:30 - 3:30pm Suggested Audience/Level: All - Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Luca Cristofani**, Italian Women's Junior National Team Head Coach

Division I Bracketing 101: Understanding the NCAA Tournament Selection and Seeding Process*

(KCCC 2505AB) Thursday, December 14, 2:30 – 3:30pm

Suggested Audience/Level: College - Intermediate

Featured Speaker: Lisa Peterson, DI Volleyball Committee Chair Rick Cole Jr., DI Volleyball Committee Member Kristin Fasbender, NCAA

Everyone loves a good save.

You can save \$100 by registering before November 3rd.



CONVENTION SCENE

Making Your Middles Available on Out-of-system Plays**

(Mateflex Court 1) Thursday, December 14, 3:45 – 4:45pm Suggested Audience/Level: All - Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Heather Olmstead**, BYU

Setter Training: Thinking Like a Coach On and Off the Court*

(KCCC 2502AB) Thursday, December 14, 3:45 – 4:45pm Suggested Audience/Level: All – Intermediate

Featured Speakers: Shannon Wells, University of Florida

ACL Injury Prevention – You Can Decrease Your Player's Risk*

(KCCC 2502AB) Friday, December 15, 10:30 – 11:30am Suggested Audience/Level: All – Intermediate

Featured Speakers: **Meghan Hubbell**, MS, AT, PTA, Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Giving Your Players "Homework" – Get Thousands of Reps Off the Court to Accelerate Your Player's Skill Development*

(KCCC 2502AB) Friday, December 15, 11:45 – 12:45pm Suggested Audience/Level: High School/Club – Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Kyle Mashima**, Rotate 123

Being Intentional About Culture Creation and Maintenance*

(KCCC 2505AB) Friday, December 15, 11:45 – 12:45pm Suggested Audience/Level: All – Advanced

Featured Speakers: **Theresa Beeckman**, Tree Roots Culture Consulting

The Green Light Libero: Rethinking How We Use This Player*

(KCCC 2502AB) Friday, December 15, 1:15 – 2:15pm Suggested Audience/Level: College - Intermediate

Featured Speaker: *Mike Hebert*, Retired Minnesota Head Coach

From Paper to Practice: Developing a "Team Value System" That Fosters a Championship Culture*

(GCCC C160 - 162) Friday, December 15, 2:30 - 3:30pm Suggested Audience/Level: All - Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Beth Wilmeth**, University of Northwestern

Recruiting International Prospects: How to navigate the Process and Create International Contacts*

(KCCC 2504AB) Friday, December 15, 3:45 – 4:45pm Suggested Audience/Level: College – Advanced

Featured Speaker: Jesica Umansky, SportLinx360

Steps for Building a Successful Boy's Program*

(KCCC 2503AB) Saturday, December 16, 9am – 10am Suggested Audience/Level: Men's/Boy's – Intermediate

Featured Speaker: **Kenny Rogers**, MotorMVB Foundation

Teaching the Future Leaders in the Sport: The Importance of Mentoring the Coaches on Your Staff*

(KCCC 2505AB) Saturday, December 16, 10:15 – 11:15am Suggested Audience/Level: All – Intermediate

Featured Speaker: Shelton Collier, Wingate University



Convention App

Download the 2017 AVCA Annual Convention app and customize your convention experience. Interactive show schedule, exhibitor listings, product searches, show floor map, show

alerts, social media interaction, exhibitor e-brochures, product info and more! $\ensuremath{\mathsf{C}}$

Rise to the occasion.

For information on hotels and registration, visit www.avcaconvention.org





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MOTOR MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

Bit by Bit: Growing a Boys' Program While Maintaining Quality

With Derek Jensen, Division1 Volleyball Club

DIVISION1 VBC started as a boys-only volleyball club in 2007, working to develop and adjust its club model before adding girls in the 6th year. Over the decade, D1 has averaged 25–30% growth per year. With 12% more boys participating in high school boys' volleyball than four years ago, it's worth examining the business factors that are critical to the growth and maintenance of a boys' volleyball program.

Since adding girls', one of D1's major focuses has been to push membership younger each year – creating a viable program for middle school boys and catering training to also work for girls ages 10–13.

After having one middle school boys' team in 2014, D1 has grown to support 15 total teams across three unique seasons in 2016–17.

The growth of the boys' middle school program can be attributed to the following key factors:

- D1 recognizes middle school boys are often playing multiple sports and busy with extracurricular activities. Given this, they (and their parents) are often not ready to commit to a traditional year-round club season. Offering multiple shorter seasons has proven successful in increasing participation. Since offering fall, winter, spring and summer seasons (8–14 weeks each), D1 has seen a 4–5x increase in participation since 2014.
- Training-only programs (practice-only, no weekend tournament commitments) have been a popular introduction for brand new club athletes and busy multi-sport athletes looking to keep up with their skills.
- In 2017, with consistently 50–60 middle school boys participating in any given season, D1 is seeing a stronger interest in a traditional full "elite" team program.
- D1 has committed our top coaches to the middle school gym in order to

develop the type of athlete we would like to see in our high school gyms before bad habits develop.

Training

As D1 has grown on the boys' side, the club has worked to expand the tiers of its company as well. With club, it is easy to just add another head coach as you grow by one team, especially if you have the space in a training gym; however, D1 has taken it even further and added more coaches and staff per player than in previous seasons. Quality training is the reason a club grows, and **it is of the utmost importance to maintain that same level of quality, for every athlete, as a club continues to expand.**

Communication

I feel that the biggest issues in club volleyball are created by miscommunication or a lack of understanding. A simple email to the families can create a sense of community, importance and belonging, and eliminates the opportunity for parents to fill in the blanks on their own with false, potentially damaging information. You want to make the families' lives easy – which means you are not just looking to get information out, but attempting to answer any questions ahead of time and "over-inform."

Examples of D1's Efforts to keep communication simple, effective and informative:

- Links to online commitment deposits emailed out the night of tryouts
- A personal response from the owner and director to every single commitment deposit received – this can be daunting at 3am after tryouts but sets a great tone before the season has even started
- Have a welcome email with as much info on the season as possible ready to go before tryouts. As soon as teams have been confirmed, send out that

email and get the ball rolling.

- Before the season starts, send update emails and reminders at least once a week

 builds the excitement for the season and takes the stress out of the first practice.
- Invoice system with easy online payment options
- Online calendar embedded in our website
- Emails to families with link to tourney page as soon as schedule is released
- Follow up with a specific team after a great weekend, and after a particularly bad weekend
- Club newsletters with training videos, player highlights, alumni check-ins and more "behind the scenes" info

Advertising

Word-of-mouth will always be your best form of marketing, so make sure you are focusing more on the quality of your gym and communication rather than finding new people to join.

D1 has found that the best ways to engage new members and grow awareness for its boy's club are as follows:

- Attend local middle school and high school games
- · Post on neighborhood events websites
- Run targeted Facebook/Google ads
- Keep a clean and organized website
- Take part in community events and donate lessons where applicable
- Play in local adult volleyball leagues and tournaments, and engage with the volleyball community. Boys' volleyball is a small and close-knit community, and being a valuable member of that group goes a long way.

Be prudent in your growth: find an affordable gym, don't sacrifice quality for numbers, limit staff to those you know can help grow the program effectively, and get involved in the local volleyball community.

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WRITER'S DESK



Vans, Inexperience and the Wrong Decision

Terry Pettit

IN THE EARLY DAYS of Nebraska Volleyball, we traveled in a Dodge 16passenger van. It might have held 16 gymnasts with room to exhale, but it wasn't designed to hold a head coach, 12 volleyball players, a manger and a dozen volleyballs. That's right, in 1977 teams traveled with the balls that they used to warm up with before a match.

My first road trip as a head coach at Nebraska was to Madison, Wisconsin, a 16hour round trip, no matter which way you cut through Iowa. The highlights were crushing six inches of grasshoppers on the Mississippi River Bridge in Dubuque, Iowa, and eating at a restaurant owned by a former New York Yankees pitcher in the Amana Colonies.

At least those were my highlights. The player highlights may have been munching on bags of M&Ms while the head coach tried to stay awake on blue two-lane highways in Wisconsin. There was no relief driver, no compression suits, no video of the opponents, no three-game matches: (everything was to two games to 15 points).

There were no advantages in traveling by van. It didn't help the team bond. We didn't share stories that were passed on for years; we didn't get anything out of it besides dehydration and leg cramps as we limped into Madison where frat brothers were hanging out of windows somehow drinking beer while hanging upside down.

My first year at Nebraska we carried 24 women on the roster. That first trip to Madison was after two and a half weeks of practice with a head coach who was still evaluating the returning players and new freshmen. It was hard to know whether or not the best combination of players was heading to Wisconsin, in part because some of the freshmen appeared to be better athletes than the upperclassmen.

Only four of the women were on partial athletic scholarships, and two of them were freshmen. There was one player who had one year of eligibility who had never attended college. Another player left for Utah State in the middle of preseason practices. When I called her home to ask where she was, her parents, who were both employed by the Lincoln school system, told me she was sick and at home in bed. In truth, she had been recruited away from Nebraska by a visiting coach who spoke at the Nebraska State Coaches Clinic.

The highlights were crushing six inches of grasshoppers on the Mississippi River Bridge in Dubuque, Iowa ...

A core group of the returning players had played for a local amateur team in the spring. The head coach of that team, who had applied for the head coaching position at Nebraska, was not happy when I implemented year-round training for the Huskers. Lincoln was a strong volleyball community, but it was split into tribes that competed for local and regional talent. None of them were happy when the University program took priority.

There was plenty of talent, although some of it was misdirected. One promising freshman left campus after the fall because her parents were alarmed that a train ran through campus. A junior college transfer, who I had coached at Louisburg College, left home in the middle of the fall season because she became homesick.

The team did have some good individual players, but the program had experienced limited success against competition outside the region. Besides the Big 8 and a tournament in California, the schedule also included smaller schools like Kearney, UNO and St. Cloud State. Collegiate women's volleyball had yet to make a distinction between large universities and smaller colleges.

Everyone, players, coaches and administrators, were inexperienced with women's sports. The athletic director and former legendary football coach Bob Devaney once accompanied the senior women's administrator onto the court to congratulate our players on a two-set sweep over Wyoming. The problem was that the match was three out of five sets. That was the only volleyball match the AD saw over the next 12 years.

The only thing that I remember about the tournament in Madison is that we split every two-game match against six other universities. Consistency would be the biggest challenge for the 1977 Huskers and it would become our goal for every season into the future. The '77 squad placed second in the regional championship in Grand, Forks, North Dakota, losing to powerhouse Southwest Missouri State in the Finals.

It was after that loss that I made one very good decision, and one that in retrospect was a mistake. A blizzard hit Grand Forks that night. Southwest Missouri flew back to Springfield following the match, but as we prepared to leave for the two-day trip home in a van and a station wagon, the roads closed.

Other than the trip I made in a jeep to downtown Grand Forks to wire for money from the athletic department, the doors of the Holiday Inn remained shut for the next 48 hours. Wiring for money was the good decision.

The questionable decision? Southwest Missouri had dominated Nebraska for several years. Following the loss in the regional finals, the SWMS head coach, Linda Dollar, told me that we were good enough to receive an invitation to Nationals. The AIAW nationals was a 24 -team tournament at one site. Linda was on the national committee and she could lobby for an invitation.

I thought hard about her suggestion. I thought hard about the snow accumulating on the UND campus and the likelihood that we wouldn't get back before Thanksgiving. I thought about what it would mean to reward *(continued on page 26)*

MEDIA ISSUES

Sounding Off: An Interview with Reporter Jeff Sheldon

David Portney



WE TALK A LOT about the media, but how often do we talk *to* the media? I gave a call to Jeff Sheldon, who works the University of Nebraska Volleyball beat for the *Omaha World-Herald*

in Nebraska. His perspective is valuable and similar to many local reporters that we all deal with during the season. He has a separate fulltime job working in communications for a public advocacy group while also regularly reporting on Huskers Volleyball throughout the year. I met him last year in Columbus at the NCAA Women's Division I Semifinals, and promised that at some point this year I wanted to chat with him. Well, better late than never! Here are the highlights from our talk.

AVCA: What would you say to a coach that is weary of the press?

JS: "The press is the bridge between the program and the fanbase they're hoping to reach. If there is an issue that comes up that would be a negative light on the program, we can't shy away from covering that as well, but everyone understands what their job is. The press has certainly brought more positive attention to the Nebraska program than negative.

AVCA: What if they don't want to divulge too much info, thinking it can be used by an opponent?

JS: "Any opposing coach worth their coaching job is going to be able to watch 10 minutes of game film and understand what you're trying to do way better than if I write 15 stories about it."

AVCA: How should coaches handle reporters who don't have a strong grasp of the sport?

JS: "Embrace the opportunity to educate not only about your program, but the sport.

A coach can always ask a reporter, 'Do you understand what I'm saying when I say this?' Coaches at their core are educators. They're teaching players every day what they want. To embrace that when they're talking to the public, and the way to reach them through the press, is a healthy attitude to take."

AVCA: How proactive should programs be in reaching out to reporters?

JS: "That would be a piece of advice I would have for any coaches or sports information directors that are reading this. Reporters are often limited by either the amount of time they're able to spend on volleyball, or the space they're allotted. The best thing you can do is make your reporter's job as easy as possible, and pitch them an idea. Tell them a great story about an athlete that should be profiled for certain reasons. Tell them about notable milestones that are coming up in a coach's career. Even if they say no when you pitch it to them, maybe it's something they can write about in a week or two."

AVCA: Sounds like you're speaking from experience.

JS: "I have the thinking that no question is too dumb to ask, and I think Nebraska has been very kind in treating all of my questions that they think might be no-brainers as legitimate ones. Coaches are like the college professors of their sport. We understand the people we're trying to get to come to our matches might not understand the ins and outs of it, but if you can sell volleyball to them and help them understand and become passionate about it, then you have a fan for life, a potential donor or a future recruit."

AVCA: What are the most important responsibilities of a host school to accommodate the media?

JS: "If we called and requested a media pass, make sure that's there. Being able to provide statistics regularly throughout the match whether it's at set breaks, or especially at the very ends of the match is very important. Also, the availability of a coach to speak with me, even if it's just on the phone for 15 minutes, is incredibly important."

AVCA: What if a coach or player has a bad match, and really doesn't want to talk about it with reporters?

JS: "Keep in mind that the reporter's job is largely to get you, your program, teammates and coaches exposure. Even if it's in a loss, we understand you're not going to be in the best mood, but we want to explain why someone had a good match or struggled. Reporters in almost every case are not trying to trap or trick you into saying anything controversial. We're just trying to explain and understand what's going on, so we can explain that to our readers, viewers and listeners. It comes from a place of good intentions."

AVCA: What makes for the best stories?

JS: "The best stories aren't about the best systems, schemes or numbers. The best stories are always about people. There's an old saying that 'numbers numb and stories sell.' A story about a 6-2 offense might be interesting to 15 people, but a story about a player who tore her ACL as a freshman, and put in all of the work to overcome it ... that's a story 100 people want to read because they can relate to that."

JS: What advice would you give a coach who thinks their program deserves more media coverage?

JS: "It'd be great if more programs were an advocate for themselves. I've talked to other coaches at different programs as well who want to know how to get the level of media coverage that Nebraska gets, and I always tell them not to be afraid to be your program's most vocal advocate. It never hurts to build the relationship at the very least. That's the way it starts. Asking them to stop by a match and say hello might be a nice way to do that."



GETTING FIT

Creating a Culture of Movement: Lessons from the Dominican Republic

Ken Kontor

PERFORMANCE CONDITIONING VOLLEYBALL has introduced our Movement to Muscle program in an attempt to intervene with the development of the young athlete to correct and teach good movement skill for strength training programming. The M-2-M mission statement is to educate and empower the coach to test proper movement skills in their athletes. Based on negative test results, the coach provides a corrective exercise program to improve movement skills.

Hopefully what is done in the culture of the Dominican Republic can permeate to the youth culture in the United States to achieve M-2-M. It is a tall order, but the following insights from Mike Myers, Houston Astros Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach (Dominican Summer League), Santo Domingo, offers a fresh look and a place to start the discussion.

The Dominican Republic offers the conditioning professional a unique opportunity to work with young athletes who have little or no experience in conditioning. They come to their academies with a "clean physical slate," which provides an opportunity to develop a culture that will enhance their performance through conditioning, starting from the beginning. The culture as stated by the Houston Astros starts with proper movement activity and then develops strength and muscle mass, with focus on the continuation of proper movement skills. This culture is not our norm. Is it realistic to expect culture change here, focusing on good movement skills coinciding with sport skills and enhanced by proper physical conditioning? Young athletes face inactivity from social media use, video gaming and cell phone addiction that are exacerbated by the lack of physical education available during developmental years. Where do you begin?

Defining Strength: A New Definition

We define strength not by how much force an athlete can produce, but also how efficiently that force is being produced. **Creating a Movement-based Culture**

The basis for creating this culture is to hold athletes accountable to the correct way in strength training. In order to do this, the players must know what constitutes good movement patterns and how this concept is integrated into strength training. The other important factor is having staff members on the same page.

Accountability: The Importance of Assessments

If we want a true change to occur, we have to shape an environment in which athletes will change. The process we use is as follows: *objectively* testing for movement, re-testing frequently throughout the season, and creating corrective groups in order to improve faulty movement patterns. The objectivity keeps us accountable as coaches. We need a system that clearly and undisputedly shows us if an athlete is getting better, worse or staying the same. That lets us know if our corrective exercises are really working.

Staff Considerations: Coaching Buy-in Leads to Athlete Buy-in

It is important to work for an organization with which your values align. Some medical professionals are in tune with the structural aspect, but not with the chronic movement compensation issues. The same consideration holds true for skill coaches. Some coaches either do not understand it or do not see the value. This is a missed opportunity to develop durability and on-field performance for a player. It is important that strength and conditioning coaches align themselves with skill coaches as much as possible because we are all trying to achieve the same thing; movement efficiency.

Expanding this Culture

We relate movement not only to the weight room, but to everyday activities. Posture is a discussion that takes place in the weight room, during the dynamic warm-up, during lunch, etc.

How to Deliver This Information in the Most Effective Way

Be the change! Share this information with passion and intensity. Be energetic, because it takes energy to make changes. How do we make it come alive? Sometimes I will walk around the complex with a hunchback for fun and to reinforce good movement. They laugh and say, "You are loco!" We have fun.

The Start – What do you Think?

- Educate teachers, coaches and parents on the importance of good posture and movement skills.
- Start young athletes on movement conditioning, not strength training.
- Schools need to reinforce this through PE and/or recess.
- Teachers/parents must demand good posture from their kids and work on it as a team.
- Coaches/parents must take this to the next level by adding good movement skills to good posture and work on it as a team.

Vans, Inexperience and the Wrong Decision

(continued from page 24)

a team that hadn't reached its goal. (We lost in a tough five-set match, and Nebraska had yet to defeat SMSU.) I thought hard about my wife who would was scheduled to deliver a child within the week. I was tired of vans. I was tired of marshalling a team in a different direction. I was an inexperienced head coach. I made the wrong decision. Fatigue won out and we waited another year to advance to the AIAW National Championship after defeating Southwest Missouri in the Regional Finals.

Terry Pettit – Author of Trust and the River Selected Poems *now available at www.terrypettit.com*

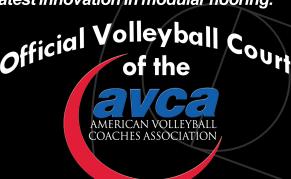




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ASSISTANT COACHES COLUMN

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Climbing Out of the Well: Coaching a Player Out of a Slump









Marie Zidek Brad H U. of San Diego UCLA

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COPING WITH FAILURE in victory and defeat is critical at all levels for every volleyball player. Volleyball is a unique sport in that at match end, the losing team could have earned more points than the winning team ... and still have lost! Another way to

look at it is that winning a set 25-23 means that the winning team failed to win the point 47.9% of the time. The game truly comes down to who can weather failure most effectively and put themselves in the best situation to win the most important point: the very next one.

Success and failure in player performance is often multi-layered. Players react to repeated failure and subpar individual performance in different ways. Every coach has dealt with a "slumping player" at some point in

his/her career. The same challenge remains true for coaches during practices, video sessions and meetings. How do we help an underperforming or "slumping" player handle their current ratio of success-to-failure on the court? How can we, as coaches, help them make the adjustments necessary to swing that ratio back into a positive balance? Try this action plan!

Ask Questions - "Get curious, not furious!" Every player learns and responds differently to distinct cues and pressured learning situations. Gaining insight into the player's perspective on what they are seeing or feeling when they are attempting to execute a skill helps us determine how to approach that player most effectively. This includes not assuming you know exactly how the player is feeling or what they see. By inviting the player to share their perspective, we not only sharpen our focus on what may be causing the player to struggle in execution, but also bring the player's attention back to the present rather than on past performances. No matter how well we think we understand how our players feel about struggling, asking questions empowers the player to take ownership of the solution at the time when they are feeling vulnerable. This can help start to move the player back into a balanced performance state.



Invest in the Solution – It is important to put ourselves in the struggling player's shoes and invest in the solution. Empathy is a critical skill for every coach, but can be confused with sympathy or trying to soothe a struggling player. Often the analogy of someone "stuck in a well" is used to define empathy more clearly. Empathy isn't seeing someone down in a cold, dark well only to throw them a blanket and some food. Empathy also isn't pulling the player out solely on your own without that player's help. Empathy is climbing down into that cold dark well and sitting at the bottom with them. After listening to your "slumping" player's perspective patiently, communicate your perspective on the solution directly and honestly with the player. It is easy to tell a struggling player who knows that they are not at their best, "Don't worry you're doing great," or "You're fine." These soothing statements don't bring us closer to a solution and can chip away at our credibility with the player. As coaches, we are not required to have every solution right away, but our players have to know that we are always willing to take the time to collaborate with them to find the solution.

Be the Eye of the Hurricane, Not the Storm – Words and body language are incredibly powerful and have a very real im-

pact on the mindset of our players. A struggling player is aware of their subpar performance. How a coach reacts to poor execution is the most immediate impression from which players will model their own thoughts and behavior. Volleyball is a multi-skilled game affording players many avenues to affect the outcome of a match. It is vital to keep players struggling in one phase of their game level-headed, which allows them to concentrate on impacting the match positively in other skill areas that their position re-

quires. For example, an outside hitter may have a poor passing game, so that player may focus on being that much better in attacking, defense, serving and blocking. When players stay calm, cool and collected, they stand a better chance of preventing their inability to execute in one skill from "bleeding" into other facets of their game. By staying positive and keeping our input relevant to the solution, we help our players stay focused on "climbing out of the well."

Circle Back – After the player has some time in practice to execute the aspect of the game that may be eluding them on the court, continue to ask questions. Ask if the player can identify a difference in what they see, hear or feel when experiencing success or failure on the court. The more input coaches receive from the player in their own words, the more coaches are able to understand how that specific player frames their performance. This type of relationship can help us craft the most impactful descriptions of our observations and can help us continue to coach our players to their potential.

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