



Covering the Court



The Official Volleyball Newsletter of the Arizona Region of U.S.A. Volleyball Vol. 9 No. 2

From the Commish – 25 Years in: Did You Know?

This year, the Arizona Region will celebrate our 25th anniversary. Consider when we split from Sun Country Region and became the Cactus Region, we had 27 Jr. boys players, 545 girls and 306 adults for a total of 878 members. As the next 25 years gets underway, there are many exciting developments that both our members and the public might like to know about. Consider the following, did you know . . .

That Phoenix will once again host the USA Volleyball Open Championships for adults in May 2014. A great deal of growth has occurred in downtown Phoenix since the Open Championships and the tournament is expected to attract even more teams.

That a new facility known as Sporting Chance Center has opened in Tucson with eight volleyball courts. The facility is the result of more than ten years worth of hard work raising funds and working with people in Tucson to build a facility that can be enjoyed for years to come.

That a national program known as SafeSport is being rolled out this year by the US Olympic Committee and all the National Governing Bodies including USA Volleyball. The program is designed to educate parents, players and coaches about various aspects of sport in an effort to make sport participation safer for all. Go to the website SafeSport.org for more information on the USOC program.

That membership in the Arizona Region has grown in terms of both members and teams even when the economy was experiencing a downturn. With the 2014 US Open Championships being held in Phoenix and an even greater number of post-season tournaments available for juniors, the Region is hoping to see those numbers climb even higher.

That the Grassroots Department of the Arizona Region is continuing in its efforts to bring volleyball to people in the state in new and exciting ways. Special Olympics continues to grow and there is an ongoing effort to increase awareness of the volleyball opportunities for the disabled through Sitting Volleyball and other programs.

That the Arizona Region has one of the finest junior referee development programs in the nation and the numbers of juniors participating in the program continues to grow. Officiating provides an excellent way to grow the officials' ranks, to earn money for our junior members and to learn more about our sport from the other side of the whistle.

The Arizona Region is hoping that you will be just as excited as we are about these developments and that many of them will lead to even greater involvement in volleyball. If you have any interest in or questions about any of these or other programs in the Region, please give our Office a call.

Looking forward to the next 25 years,

Harold W. Cranswick

Commissioner, Arizona Region of USA Volleyball



New Policies and Changes for the Upcoming Season(s)

SafeSport Program

The USOC has mandated that each National Governing Body (NGB) join their SafeSport effort to protect athletes and coaches from abuse (sexual or otherwise). USA Volleyball as the NGB of Volleyball in the US is developing a program to comply. The program will launch this September with USAV and be implemented in full over a 2 year period. The program will educate players and their parents regarding bullying, threats and harassment, hazing, harassment including sexual harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct. Included in all of these will be the use of social media and electronic communications. A SafeSport Info Form will be developed by the Arizona Region and each participant will be required to sign off on the form as a part of the registration process.

The Region will be hiring a Regional SafeSport Contact (RSC) for educating, reporting and follow up.

New Ball for Boys JNC & Adult Open Championships

USA Volleyball will be using the Molten V5M5000 balls for the Boys JNC and US Open Championships. The Arizona Region will provide these balls as game balls for the Boys' and Adult tournaments as long as the balls don't disappear from the sites. These are the same balls that High Performance has been using only red, white and blue in color.

Boys Nationals Reimbursement & Boys Spring Season

The Boys Junior Forum voted to use the money formerly set aside for the BJNC entry fee reimbursement to start a boys spring season for 14 and under teams. Therefore no entry fees will be reimbursed for the boys' Region Championships going forward.

The boys' spring season will be for 14 and under teams. The boys' teams will play the half day format of the girls' Club/Championship Division. They will use JODP referees to help keep the cost low for the grassroots program. The fees collected from the boys' fall teams will be used to help underwrite the tournament expenses for the boys' spring season.

Handling Fees for Credit Card Payments

Credit cards are a very convenient way to pay fees to the Region and entries into tournaments. Clubs also use the points earned by putting their fees and contracts on their

credit cards to the benefit of the club. However, credit card fees for contracts and tournament entries were not built into the fees the Region charges and therefore is costing the Region a great deal of money. The Region paid \$18k in credit card related fees for the 2012-13 season. Therefore, for 2013-14 season and beyond there will be a handling charge of 3% added to all fees for services and merchandise paid to the Region with a credit card. The fees will not be applied to membership fees paid. The fees will be applied to tournament contracts, tournament entries, IMPACT clinic fees, beach program fees, high performance camps and team payments, t-shirts and officials' gear paid to the Region with a credit card. This way the cost for services will only be raised for those that choose to use credit cards for their payments.

Rule Changes for 2014

There are many rule changes for the 2013-14 season affecting the referee portion of the game. The score sheet has also been revised with a new look and easier flow. Anyone that will be officiating or scorekeeping at a tournament should attend a score/ref clinic.

USAV to require certified Adult R2 for all 14 and younger age groups

Beginning with the 2014 season, all 14 and younger teams participating in a National Qualifier or the Junior National Championships will be required to provide a certified Adult R2 during their referee assignments. No longer will a certified team member be allowed to R2.

The Arizona Region is going to allow a junior age player that has been certified as an R2 to officiate in the R2 position during region play. However each coach of a 14 and younger team must be certified to R2 and work at least 1 match per region tournament. This will be tracked by the site director at each tournament. It is also highly recommended that each team also certify 1 or more additional adults to R2 in the event the coach is ill or unable to attend the tournament. The penalty for a team not having a certified adult official working at least one match each tournament is \$30 (the cost of an official for one match) which is payable to the AZ Region prior to the next tournament. It is unclear how large interregional tournaments (such as Volleyball Festival) will handle this at their tournament.

Continued next page

Girls Club Open House Period and Tryout/Commitment Date

In an attempt to allow players and their parents the opportunity to become educated about different clubs and find the right club for their daughter to attend tryouts and participate for the season an established Open House Period has been created prior to the start of the tryout season.

The Open House Period will begin 10 days before the established tryout start date for a specific age group. A club may offer no more than 3 separate 2 hour sessions for each age group during the 10 day period. Clubs may offer an open house type setting where the potential players and their parents may come and talk to the clubs about what they have to offer, meet the coaches in their age group and see the practice location of the club or may offer open gyms or evaluations of the players skills to let them know how they might fit into their club. The club MAY NOT offer a player a position on a team in their club, take any commitment fees or down payments nor require or allow any player to commit to their club until after the completion of the TRYOUT session. Open Gyms and/or Clinics/Camps held by a club during the Open House Period would be considered one or both of their 3 hour sessions.

- A club MAY NOT hold tryouts until on or after the established tryout dates.
- The established tryout date for the 12's – 14's is the first Saturday following the last state HS Championship match – this year that date is Nov 16th.
- The established tryout date for the 15's – 18's is the second Saturday following the last state HS Championship match – this year that date is Nov 23rd.



A club may ask for a commitment immediately following the tryout session. The Region would consider a player committed to the club for the season upon acceptance of the club offer by the player followed by payment of commitment/initial fees to the club. Once a player has committed to a club they are no longer eligible to tryout or practice with another club until the end of Jr Nationals in July 2014 or until being granted a release by the club. A club is not obligated to give a player a release.

Region Club Nights will still be held as a way for clubs to connect with potential players. ASU Club Night will be held on Friday, Oct 18th. GCU Club Night will be held on Monday, Nov 4th. Participation in Region Club Nights will not be considered part of the Open House Period.

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Girls Open Tournament Format

Some girls' Open Division coaches requested that the girls Open Division tournament format be changed to the format the Boys Division uses for their tournaments. The boys' format gives a team 4 matches per day instead of the 5 currently scheduled. The girls Open Division format will stay the same this season – 5 matches per day. This discussion item will be put on the agenda for the Girls Junior Forum in the spring.

Jersey Changes coming for 2014-15 Season

– from Steve Thorpe, USAV Rules Interpreter

Beginning in the 2014-15 USAV season, the following verbage will be used in regards to Libero jerseys contrasting with regular team jerseys.

As of SEPTEMBER 1, 2014, it is required that either the Libero or their teammates wear a solid color jersey. The solid color jersey must clearly contrast from the predominant color(s) of the teammates' jersey. Predominant colors are those that appear on approximately half of the body of the uniform jersey.

To be considered solid colored:

- a. Sleeves must be the same color as the body of the jersey
- b. Piping/trim not exceeding 1 inch in total at its widest point may be placed along the seams and may be a different color than the uniform jersey.
- c. Lettering and collars can be a different color than the body of the jersey.
- d. Numbers must be a contrasting color and meet all other specifications in Rule 4.3.3 and associated USAV regulations.

Where Do Your Membership Fees Go? By Becky Hudson

As the cost of youth sports and club volleyball seemingly rise every year, it's important for you, our membership, to know where your Region dues go and for what. The Region aims to be transparent with our finances and costs.

The Arizona Region is a 501c3 Not For Profit Corporation. It is required by USA Volleyball that we are a 501c3 Not for Profit Corporation. Our 990s are posted on GuideStar.org for all to see. We maintain a current business license with the Corporation Commission and file our tax returns annually as required by the IRS to maintain our non-profit status.

We have requirements for compliance by USA Volleyball to attend national meetings 2 times a year – this is for the Commissioner, up to 2 Junior Assembly representatives and 2 Officials Assembly representatives – a scorer and a referee.

We have requirements to educate our coaches and train our paid referees and scorers and our provisional referees and scorers annually – we also provide rule books to our coaches and officials at no cost. We have a requirement to send communication to our membership twice a year either through snail mail or on our website – we do both – we send out 1 snail mail newsletter to every member in our database each February and one major email newsletter to everyone through the email provision in Webpoint in September as well as sending out monthly or quarterly newsletters to specific groups of members (ie, coaches, club directors, parents). We have a requirement to pay our dues collected to USA Volleyball on a monthly basis and maintain accurate records. We have a requirement of USA Volleyball to update our hand-

book and policies annually and make them available to our membership – these are all on our website. We have a requirement to hold democratic elections for the positions of the Executive Board and Junior Committee. Except for the Commissioner and the Secretary/Treasurer these positions are representative of the position they serve and are elected by those members that they represent. The Commissioner and Secretary/Treasurer are elected by all regular adult (full) membership of the Region. The Executive Board member terms are for 2 years. The Junior Committee members are elected for a 3 year term.

Each individual pays an annual membership fee which provides for the annual membership with USA Volleyball, participant accident insurance in sanctioned events/practices and pays for the Region office rent, staff and operations. The full membership for an adult or junior is \$50 per year. \$22.50 goes to USA Volleyball for their operations, the participant accident insurance and an annual subscription to USA Volleyball Magazine. The remaining \$27.50 stays with the Arizona Region.

The Arizona Region office currently employs 4 staff members. We have had 1 other hourly employee over the past year but that position is currently vacant and there is no current plan to fill it. The employees do not have a benefits package – no insurance program nor retirement program. We rent our office space and have a storage shed.

We have 5 Executive Board members, 4 Junior Committee members, an Ethics and Compliance Officer, a Junior Officials Development Program Director, an Official's Assignor, a Scorer Trainer, a Referee Trainer,

a Beach Referee Trainer, a High Performance Director, 10 High Performance Coaches, 2 Beach Program Site Directors, 6 Official's Team Leaders. All of these positions, and any I have forgotten, are given a small stipend for their time over and above their day job. All of these stipends can be found in our Best Practices Manual on our website under Corporate Documents.

Any employee that also holds a position on one of the boards must decide which compensation to receive – their compensation as an employee or their stipend for the board position. If they choose their employee compensation they forfeit their board stipend and it goes unpaid.

The tournament entry fees are a separate fee. The Arizona Region runs the tournaments also as a not for profit status. The entry fee for one tournament varies depending on the length of day, number of matches per tournament, whether or not Nationals entry fees or grassroots programs are being funded.

The adults and boys contracts collect fees from each tournament that at the end of the season reimburse the entry fees for the Region Champions in the National Championships. For the upcoming season the boys' directors have opted to use that money to fund a grassroots division of boys in the spring. The attempt is to grow our boys programs by bringing boys into our programs at a younger age. This will build the strength of our boys programming by introducing the boys to volleyball at a younger age.

The contract costs and how the payment is broken down is listed on the next page :

Payments	Jr Girls Open	Jr Girls Club	Jr Boys	Adults
Host Fees	\$70	\$45	\$70	\$65
Site Director	\$15	\$10	\$10	\$10
Sanction Fee	\$15	\$15	\$10	\$10
Officials	\$62.50	\$40	\$56	\$50
Nationals	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$7.50</u>	<u>\$15</u>
Total per tourn	\$162.50	\$110	\$153.50	\$140
X # tournaments	(4) \$650	(6) \$660	(6) \$921	(5) \$700
+ Region Champ	<u>\$170</u>	<u>\$170</u>	<u>\$155</u>	<u>\$150</u>
Contract Total	\$820	\$830	\$1076	\$850

Region Sanction fees pay for the Tournament Director, helps pay for the website and awards for the divisions.

The Region runs volleyball programming for adults, junior girls, junior boys, beach and junior officials training. We offer significant expertise to the high school beach programs and beach officials training. Our grassroots programs reach out to the many city youth programs, YMCA's, inner city school volleyball programs, sitting volleyball through the Wounded Warriors program, Special Olympics uniforms for their teams to attend Nationals. We donate to the Volleyball Hall of Fame, the USA Women's Sitting Team and the USA Deaf Team. We have had athletes from Arizona participate on these two teams and win medals at the Paralympic Games.

This is our Mission Statement. "The mission of the Region (formerly known as Cactus Region which originated in 1989) is to promote, govern, oversee, plan and coordinate amateur indoor and outdoor volleyball in the Arizona Region, in order to provide a variety of opportunities for all interested parties to participate in a safe, positive and appropriately competitive environment. " It is listed on our website along with our Vision Statement.

Becky Hudson

Secretary– Arizona Region of USAV

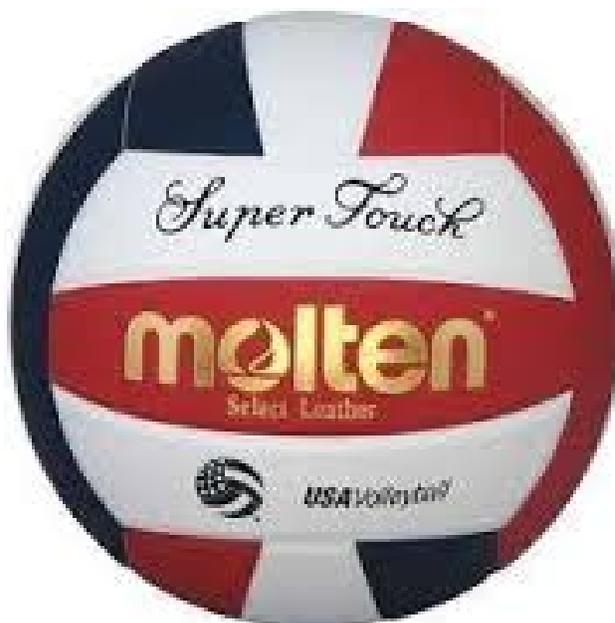
Region Offering Blogs for Coaches and Parents

The Region is proud to offer the Arizona Sidelines Coaching blog located at:

arizonasidelines.blogspot.com. From coaching tips to guest blogs, we want to answer your coaching questions.

We also offer the Court of Parent Opinion blog at **courtofparentopinion.blogspot.com**. We ask parents to look for information on the sport and information on how to become better sports parents going forward.

If you have any ideas for a blog, please e mail the Region at Outreach@azregionvolleyball.org.



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Bangers Enjoy Opens in Louisville

By Janisa Rogers

Kentucky, known for its unbridled spirit, is rich in heritage, and plenty to do. Our visit to the Bluegrass State was all that we could hope for. Louisville, home of the 2013 NCAA Division I Basketball Champs, proved to be a great host city for the USA Volleyball 2013 National Open.



With great weather, and so many places to visit such as the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, Muhammad Ali Center, and the Kentucky Derby Museum, it was a wonder that we had time to play volleyball. Although our schedule didn't allow for a lot of sight seeing, we were able to sneak away to Churchill Downs to catch a few races. We also experienced Louisville's night life as we danced the night away on 4th Street at a local bar. It was a great time for team bonding, and just getting to know one another off the court.

The Kentucky Fair and Expo Center where the tournament was held was in walking distance from our hotel. We were grateful to have an evening schedule, since the majority of our team didn't arrive until after midnight. We

were able to sleep in, run to the local grocer, and walk to the Expo Center with plenty of time to spare. The atmosphere was electric, as it always is every year. There were some familiar faces, and a lot of new faces. Of the 8 players that were able to attend from our team, 3 were newbies to the tournament.

We started off the tournament average, and a little plagued with injury. We placed 5th in our pool with a record of 3-3. This year's format was a little different than years past. What was formerly a 4 day tournament, was shortened to a 3 day tournament. Additionally, the format for tournament play was double elimination. However, this year, only the Gold Bracket had a double elimination format. All other brackets were single elimination. We were unable to hold our opponent off in our final match, ending our dream of a national championship.

Although it was a little costly to get to Louisville from Arizona, it was well worth it. We look forward to saving some money next year with the tournament being in Phoenix.



Az Fear 18White Wins Bronze Medal at Nationals

By Kyle Brainard

The Arizona Boys Region Champions, Az Fear 18-White, competed in The Junior National Championships, and brought home the Bronze Medal!

The tournament was held in Reno, NV in late/ June early July. The 1-White started off a little shaky in day one dropping matches to Spectrum 18s and IMUAB 18s, and defeated Tool City 18White. The 3rd place finish in day one pool play forced them to a challenge bracket in the morning of day two. The challenge bracket came and



went fast as Fear won both matches against MVVC 18s and Southport 18s keeping them in contention for the Gold.

On the afternoon of day two, 18-White had their back up against the wall if they wanted to continue to reach their goal of winning a medal. The team responded dramatically winning all three matches of that pool versus Tool City 18Orange, Highflyers 18s and Monterey Bay 18s. This streak of wins catapulted 18-White to the #1 seed overall in the tournament.

They held on tight to their #1 seed going into day three, where they again went undefeated beating Highline 18s, Santa Barbara 18s, and SMBC 18s only dropping one set all day. On the last day, Az Fear was



competing in the Gold Bracket as they bumped out a very talented team, Ca-nuck/Dino from Canada, 25-21, 17-25, 15-13. This win put them in a semi-final match against TVA from Puerto Rico, where they lost 22-25 and 26-28, putting them at a 3rd place finish and a Bronze Medal around their neck!

An added bonus was All-Tournament team selections that went to our own Cody Williams and Quentin Campbell

Congratulations to all the players from Az Fear 18-White for their great accomplishments during the whole 2013 season, and representing the Arizona Region well at Nationals.

Liberty Mutual Offering Grants

Want to earn \$2,500? The Responsible Sports Community Grant is a free, competition-based fundraising program for youth sports organizations promoted by Liberty Mutual Insurance. Teams, clubs and schools from around the country register to participate. Once approved to compete, organizations rally their adult supporters to take a Responsible Sport Parenting or Responsible Coaching quiz and credit the point to the organization. At the end of the three month Grant period, the organizations with the most points earn the \$2,500 Grants.

For more information, go to:

www.responsiblesports.com

Aspire 14-Black Golden in 14 Championship Division

The Aspire 14-Black team learned much along the way winning the Arizona Region's 14-Championship division at Regionals in May according to their coach, Sharon Vanis.

"I think two of the biggest strengths of this team was our depth and the way they got along." Sharon says proudly. "When I took over the team I told them that we had the talent to be successful but unless they bonded and supported each other all the talent in the world will not make them successful. Not in a team sport like volleyball; being able to count on your teammate is key."

Being a cohesive unit also helped when injuries came calling. "We had 2 injuries during the season." Vanis explained. "Our starting middle played through most of the Colorado Crossroads tournament and the Disney classic with a broken pinky finger, but nothing as small as a broken pinky was going to keep this kid off the floor. We also had a DS go down with a high ankle sprain. She missed the last part of the season but was back in time for nationals."

As a coach, Sharon appreciates how this team worked and got along all season. "I got so much enjoyment from both of my teams this season. I believe the age group I coach, 14-15's is one of the best because these kids are just discovering how great they can be." She says smiling. "I've been fortunate to have great parental support, I believe they trust me and know that I will work hard to help their daughters not only be successful but to learn the game so they can continue to blossom as players. This was only my 4th year of coaching club and the 2012-13 club season will always be one of the best."

Sharon points out that if her 14's stay together, they will only get stronger. "They will begin to mature as athletes and as young ladies, but things change and kids and parents go different directions. I believe they will all be successful volleyball players."



Arizona Fear 16s Gain Experience at Nationals

By Kyle Brainard

The 16s team from Arizona Fear Volleyball Club was just one of four Arizona teams that headed to The Junior National Championships in Reno this summer. The Az Fear 16-White, composed mostly of 15 year-olds, gained experience and knowledge to what it takes to compete at the highest level in the country.

After dropping the first two matches of the tournament to Spectrum 16s and MVVC16s, they showed great competitiveness by winning their third match against Warren Sixpak. This win forced a 3-way tie, where they eventually lost again to MVVC in the tie-breaker.

In the second round of pool play, Fear 16-White played tough competition, and finished 2nd in the pool, only dropping a match to Highline, and beating both E.N.E. 16s and IMUAB 16s. Day 3 showed to be a little tougher than day two, but the team displayed great heart and dropped a 3 set match to SMBC 16s and then lost another match to Vegas 16s.

After a couple long nights in the gym, 16-White was competing in the Flt6 division on the fourth tournament day where they ultimately lost to Tejas. They lost the first set and battled in the second only losing 27-29. This was a great experience and there was so many successes that happened during this summer. This young group was able to compete against, and see what the competition looks like across the country.

South Mountain Starlings Persevere in 16 Club Final

South Mountain Starling's 16-1's coach Patricia Irving said her team's Regional tournament started earlier than the rest of the Club division.

"Our Regionals actually started two weeks before the tournament," Irving said. "The girls worked hard all season and were undefeated in region play. We took over the number one overall seed in the 16's division the week before Regionals but lost the first match of the day and dropped to 3rd. For the next two weeks the girls worked hard in the gym and I saw that they really were upset. I can never sleep the night before tournaments but I slept well this time. At 5:30 A.M. I received a text from a player saying, 'Coach let's go get our medals today!' The girls went out and played well and made the championship game against the team that took our number one seed. It was a great match but when our middle executed her slide and we ran our plays the girls looked great!"

Looking golden is how it should be described as Irving's persevering squad won the gold medal in the 16 Club division.

"These young ladies are truly special." Irving

says purposefully. "I have a core of 7 that returned from my 14's team that won the bronze and finished second in nationals with three of them playing club for the first year. This year we started off winning one preseason tournament and making the championship game in another."

Irving says the team's turning point of the year was the Festival Fiesta Classic tournament. "We finished behind two big clubs. That's when I knew big things are ahead of these young ladies."

That kind of excellence is also seen in their off the court activities. "These young ladies are inseparable and volunteer time in the community and all are honor students." With this kind of commitment, Tracy sees the pay off.

"This is my third region title in my six years of coaching region ball and this is by far the best team. The girls have a high volleyball IQ and our summer program is great; we have anywhere from 4-8 college players in working with the girls, mentoring them on all aspects and also looking to recruit for their colleges as well."

Fusion's Fusion Shows Itself in 14 Club Championship

Club Fusion's 14 Black squad proved their club's moniker right and won the 14 Club Championship at the Arizona Regional tournament on May 4th.

"This team was very special because they were able to form such a tight bond." Said coach Mareen Hunzeker. "All the girls got along so well and became each others' best friends. They were able to carry that chemistry onto the court." The fusion of Club Fusion played into their Regionals day as well. "Our goal at the beginning of the season was to win regionals." Hunzeker remembered. "They worked really hard to accomplish that goal."

Coach Mareen loved the way the girls finished at Regionals, topping a tough Verrado 14N1 Ignite team. "These girls accomplished a tough goal. They were able to pull together as a team and give everything they had in the championship game. It was an amazing thing to witness as a coach. I saw players finally realize the potential they have and what they can accomplish when they believe in themselves. They played amazing and I am very proud of them."

Hunzeker said she learned something important from this team. "One thing I will take away from this team is how important it is for the players to develop the confidence they need to succeed in tough situations or to recover after an error. It is so important to instill this confidence in these girls at such a young age."

After a golden season, the Fusion 14 Black team still has the brightest of futures according to Hunzeker. "If this team sticks together they will accomplish great things in the future. I know that all of these girls will be successful in the future. They are very hard workers who know how to set their minds on a goal and accomplish it."

USOC and USAV Roll Out SafeSport Program

By Becky Hudson

The US Olympic Committee has rolled out a new program aimed to protect athletes from abusive and destructive behavior either from peers or those in authority over them. After much research, it has been shown that elite athletes are at a higher risk of abuse from coaches than the general public. Much of this comes from the time they spend with the coach and the travel they have to do as part of elite sport. The revelations of abuse in USA Swimming in the recent years have prompted the research and follow up program to prevent all athletes from abuse.

SafeSport is the program the USOC is launching. All NGB's (National Governing Bodies of sport) are required to begin unveiling a SafeSport program within their sport. USA Volleyball is launching their program this fall with a 2 year time frame to unveil the entire program. Each Region will be required to roll out programs with the intent of educating the members as to what is abuse, how to prevent it and where to report it.

The SafeSport program will deal with the following types of abuse and misconduct: Bullying, Threats and Harassment; Hazing; Harassment, includ-

ing Sexual Harassment; Emotional Misconduct, Physical Misconduct; Sexual Misconduct. Policies will be implemented to reduce the risk of potential abuse – including social media and electronic communications policies and club/team travel policies. A SafeSport Contact person will be identified in the Region to be the first contact person for reporting the abuse/misconduct and the leader in the education process of Arizona Region members.

SafeSport.org is the USOC website to educate people regarding the potential abuse in sport. USA Volleyball will be launching a webpage on SafeSport in volleyball also. You will see more of SafeSport in the coming months. Join with the USOC to "Make the Commitment to Stop Abuse in Sport" on the SafeSport.org website.

"Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear"
-Nelson Mandela

WWW.SAFESPORT.ORG

Region Registration Can Be Done NOW– Avoid the Crush!

Membership registration for the 2014 season will open on Sept 1st on Webpoint.

You may access Webpoint from the AZ Region website – under Join the Region. Anyone participating with a boys' team, participating in sanctioned camps, clinics or the Fall League during the Sept – Nov time frame or attending girls' club tryouts at any club in November is required to be a 2014 member prior to participating.

Boys' membership fees are paid online in their entirety. Girls' memberships online are \$25 and when the player makes a club team the remaining \$25 will be paid to the club who then forwards to the Region. At that time the membership will be considered a Full Junior Membership. Any girls' membership that is not upgraded to a Full Junior Membership will be considered a Training Membership and the girl is not allowed to be put on a team roster.

Junior coaches that are also Adult team members should register as full adult memberships and associate with the junior club. The Region will associate the player with the adult team.

Collegiate memberships are for those adult team members that are registered in college only. Junior coaches may not use the collegiate membership even if they are in currently enrolled in college.

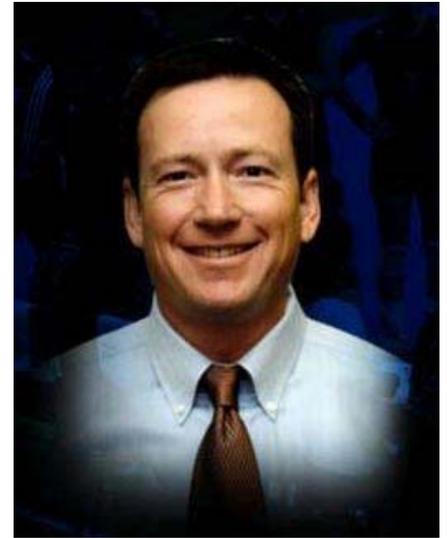
Anyone associated with a junior club must submit and clear a background screen every 2 consecutive seasons. The background screen must be through the USAV approved vendor SSCI. No other background screens or FBI finger print cards can be substituted for this background screen.

Meet the New NAU Coach– Ken Murphy

Recently hired Northern Arizona University Coach Ken Murphy took a few minutes to chat with the Arizona Region about his new gig, where the program is and where he wants it in the coming years.

AZR: Ken, give us your background for those that don't know too much about you yet.

KM: After moving away from Arizona, I continued coaching club in Fort Collins, Colorado while working on a graduate degree. Although I had the goal of coaching collegiate volleyball, I didn't know how realistic that was at the time so I continued with my education. In 1997, I was asked to be an assistant at Colorado State and that opportunity was really the springboard into the rest of my coaching career. The team at CSU made 3 NCAA tournaments, including a Sweet 16 appearance, and provided me with a lot of opportunities. In 2000, I took an assistant coaching job at the University of Idaho. After spending a couple of years there, that position became an Associate Head Coach position and we qualified for 2 NCAA tournaments. At some point during my last couple of years there, I began receiving contacts about Division 1 Head Coaching positions and in 2006 I took the Head Coaching job at the University of Texas at El Paso. Similar to my time at Idaho, it took a little time to get things turned around at UTEP but we built ourselves into a strong contender in Conference USA and put together the best back to back seasons in the program's history. We also had 2 All-American players and the school's first Academic All-American. With the program going in a good direction, I knew that it was getting close to time for a new challenge and when I was contacted by NAU this spring, I was immediately interested. It sounded like they were investing in volleyball in way they never had before and I knew from my time in Phoenix, that Flagstaff was a great place to live for my family and I. I don't know if it was my goal to be in Arizona again but I am definitely comfortable here and I feel like things have worked out really well.



AZR: The NAU program has seen some nice results the past couple of years but hasn't been able to crack the tournament. What do you need to do to get them to the next level?

KM: I think the program has made some strides just based on the talent level of the players in the program. There are some very good players here. The cool thing that's happening here now is that the players are buying into the whole system and the core beliefs of the program. I think when the team (and when I say team I mean myself included, our assistants, our support staff, etc.) takes pride and ownership in what they are doing, you get a whole different product on the court. We are starting to see a team that likes to come in and work hard and challenge themselves to get better. We are starting to see a team that genuinely cares about each other and the goals that we all have. As this process continues to develop, I think you will see these outstanding players become an outstanding team. When that happens, things like postseason play and national recognition will take care of themselves.

AZR: What is your coaching philosophy?

KM: I believe I'm a teacher and mentor first. I go into the gym every day thinking that we have a plan for getting better and that it's my job to convey this plan and help with the learning process. And I know that the only way that we can sustain this is by having a positive, low stress environment in our gym where players look forward to coming to practice and challenging themselves.

AZR: What should fans expect from a Ken Murphy team and where will NAU be in 5 years?

KM: We will play hard and do everything we can to out work our opponent. I like our team to play a fast, physical style that emphasizes great blocking and defense. I think having a team concept like this makes us tough to play against but also fun to watch. I think we are at the beginning of something really great in this program. We are capable of competing at the top of the Big Sky right now and I know that our expectations as a program will continue to grow even beyond that.

2013 AZHP Programs Recap: The New and Improving By Ron Pelham

The 2013 HP Championships took place in Louisville, KY, Fort Lauderdale, FL. and Hermosa Beach, CA this summer. The Arizona Region membership was well represented by a total of 70 athletes and 12 coaches this summer for the HP Championships. The PVL team trained for several weeks before traveling and both the Beach and Indoor trained extremely hard both mentally and physically for a week prior to the competition.

Region Beach High Performance Program

Thoughts from coaches Betsi Metter and Taylor Scioscia --- "The first year of Arizona High Performance Beach Volleyball was a success. We had athletes who have played beach volleyball and some who have not. The main goal of our training was to make each individual a smarter beach volleyball player. All 12 of them worked their butts off for the 2 days of training in Arizona and five practices in California before the tournament started, and every session I saw growth in each team. Overall this was a successful first year of Arizona High Performance. Taylor and I were impressed with the work ethic of all the girls, and how open everyone was to learning and applying new things we taught them. The girls learned how to play in all elements; wind, sun, rain, etc. They really improved throughout the training and definitely throughout the tournament. I am excited to see what their futures have in store for them.

One of our best finishes was McKenna and Madison Witt, beating several of the USA teams and ended up 5th overall in the Championship Bracket of the gold division. Both McKenna and Madison received scholarships and will play sand volleyball for The University of Arizona in the upcoming season. Congratulations and Thank You to all involved on a great first year!"

Region Indoor High Performance Program

Four teams 46 athletes and 8 coaches all pulling together for one common goal making each other better in the world of volleyball. We completed in the Boys and Girls International Youth and Boys and Girls Regional divisions.

From Coach Chris Duenow--"The team came in with a wide range of competitive experience and I was very proud of how each player grew in their own game and in their ability to compete well as a team in such a short time. We challenged every team we faced and had a particularly satisfying win over the Southern California Re-

gion team on the next to last day. This was a great group of young women that represented AZ incredibly well, both as athletes, and as young people."

From Coach Ryan Woodworth-- "This year's team was a blast to work with. We had some big wins against some of the USA teams which shows the Arizona Region Boys program is continuing to grow and get stronger every year. It's was good to see each athlete grow and learn to put team success over individual success. I'm excited to see the continued growth of our region HP program in the years to come."

From Coach Megan Taylor--"The 2013 Girls Select High Performance team had a very successful tournament in Florida this year. The girls worked extremely hard all week at practice and that definitely paid off at the HP tournament. The team started off undefeated in pool play going 4-0. The fifth match of the tournament was one of our most exciting matches with an intense 5 set win against one of the top teams in the tournament and the champions from last year. The girls select team suffered 2 tough losses to put us in the silver but we were able to finish out strong winning our last match of the tournament. We finished with an overall record of 6-2 and each girl played an important role in our success. It was a fun learning experience with for both the coaches and athletes."

From Coach Troy Dueling--"This was a great experience for the younger athletes to learn how to prepare to participate in a high level tournament. To bring 12 athletes, most of them not knowing each other, together for a week of intense training and see them become a team was gratifying. I was truly impressed with the growth of each of the athletes and look forward to seeing them continue to grow during the upcoming season. I'm thankful to the region for providing this opportunity for this age group."

Arizona Sizzle

The second year of the PVL Championships was held in Louisville, KY with a growth from 12 to 15 teams. Arizona Sizzle finished tied in pool play for 2nd, however with the tiebreaker procedure found ourselves coming out 4th in the pool. This dropped them out of gold and into the silver bracket. This was definitely a defining moment for our program.

Continued next page



USA Volleyball
High Performance
Championships

Answering Your Questions: Why Concussion Forms, Background Screens?

The Arizona Region holds itself to the standards of any and all youth sports organization with the best interest of our athletes at hand. To that end, the Region has made it a policy to make sure Parents, Coaches AND Athletes are aware of the dangers of concussions.

In 2011, Arizona Senate Bill 1521 was passed. The overview states: "SB 1521 Amends current law to require school boards to develop and enforce concussion and head injury policies for all pupils participating in school district sponsored practices, games or other interscholastic activities. These guidelines must inform and educate coaches, parents and pupils of the dangers of concussions and head injuries, and requires the immediate removal from athletic activity if a pupil is suspected of sustaining a concussion. The pupil may return to play when evaluated and cleared by a health care provider."

While this was passed with school districts in mind, the Arizona Region in conjunction with USA Volleyball felt it a necessary part of Club volleyball. The forms you are asked to review and sign at the beginning of the season are designed to ensure you, as Parents and Athletes, understand the significant dangers associated with concussions. You can find much more information at www.CDC.gov.

(You can read the whole bill at

[:http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/1r/bills/sb1521h.pdf](http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/1r/bills/sb1521h.pdf))

Another of the Region's efforts to keep our ath-

letes safe comes from USA Volleyball which requires anyone in a leadership position with junior athletes to undergo a background screening.

To emphasize the seriousness of the situation, USA Volleyball has established a very stringent but reasonable list of criteria to determine who will be prohibited from interacting with juniors. USA Volleyball wants all juniors and their parents to feel confident in the knowledge that everything possible has been done to ensure that juniors will participate in a safe and secure environment. However, it is important to realize that not all organizations with juniors employ similarly stringent disqualification criteria.

In an astonishing report from SSCI (the company employed by USA Volleyball to conduct their background screening), 48% of the applicants who were disqualified as a result of the USA Volleyball background screening process would have been allowed to coach for other organizations with less stringent requirements. In other words, nearly half of the individuals who were banned from involvement with juniors in USA Volleyball would be allowed to coach children right now for other youth sport organizations that use only database searches such as Lexis Nexis

If you have other questions for the Region, please let us answer them for you. You can contact us at Outreach@azregionvolleyball.org.

Continued from previous page

We now know exactly what it will take to be a top tier team within the PVL. The Iowa Ice finished first earning a \$10,000 purse; the Florida Wave finished 2nd earning \$6500 and Pioneer Mayhem finished 3rd earning \$3500. Teams competing were: Arizona Sizzle, Evergreen Region, Florida Wave, Great Lakes Region, Hoosier Exterminators, Iowa Ice, Northern California Dream Team, North Texas Region, Team New England, Puget Sound Region, Great Plains, Western Empire Region, Pioneer Region, Badger Region and Heart of America. We are looking forward to having our best showing in 2014 here in Phoenix.

As High Performance Director, I want to thank the following for their help and support of the program: Region Staff Harold Cranswick, Becky Hudson, Lisa Naughton. The Coaching Staff: Molly Stark, Amanda Omar, Ryan Woodworth, Matt Werle, Troy Dueling, Shawn Fuller, Chris Duenow, Kristen Preach, Megan Taylor, Kelsey Lueders, Betsi Metter and Taylor Scioscia. Also huge thanks to AJ Malis for being there to help guide the program and Charlotte Pottle and Bill Lang for t-shirts and shoes. A big thank you to our sponsors: Rox Volleyball (www.roxvolleyball.com), OddiTees (www.odditees.us), Destination Phoenix (www.destinationphoenixllc.com), Muscle Milk AZ and Court One.

Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to all the parents and athletes, because without them there's not a program.

Thank you all for a great 2013 and we're off and running toward '14!

AZ Storm 15-Thunder Parlays Hard Work Into Open Gold

“All the players on this team love volleyball!” says proud coach Terri Spann. “They might dread the intense practices that come up occasionally, but the love and passion they have for the game keeps them enthused and makes them push that much harder.”

That hard push is what it took for the AZ Storm 15-Thunder to bring back Arizona’s first gold medal in the Open division of the Junior National Championships held in Dallas in early July.

“When you have a team that loves the game, you have a gym of competitive kids all on the same page that want to learn and get better. They all want to train hard so they can win!” Spann applauds.

Going into the Junior National Championships as the #5 seed, AZ Storm’s pool play in Dallas started with a 15-12 third set win over TAV 15-Black. Straight set wins in their next two matches brought them to a showdown with Northern California’s Rage Gabe 15-1’s team. It took a 16-14 third set to keep the Storm perfect. That ability to handle the pressure of big moments was born in the training the girls endured throughout the season.

“I always train the same,” Spann says, “Tough!” I always hold each player accountable and expect each player to step up to any obstacle I throw out there. There is not one easy practice these girls have. It’s always tough mentally, physically and emotionally. But that’s the key ingredient for our success. Hard work always pays off, and so far it’s been working. Every season is different with personalities and unique backgrounds but I treat all players equally and expect the same from each and every one of them. This is a talented group of players so drills are more advanced and makes for a very fun night of training.”

With a 7-0 pool play record, the Thunder moved into a three team challenge bracket to get into the gold medal round. They topped the 6th seed T-Street Chris in two tough sets and set themselves up to earn a shot at their season goal. Spann had said after the

championship, “We want to bring 11 players want to win and less! We are excited for our of hard work in the gym, but

The tournament’s Mad Frogs 15-N Joe now Thunder and a shot at the their ability to overcome ob- them.

“Every tournament says. “Whether it was an stepped up, we had mental

result is all that matters. You train to compete and while competing we were challenged. Sometimes it was more mental over physical, but we overcame always! Lessons were learned every tournament so we had a different outlook every time we walked back in the practice gym. A new goal to focus on and we always did better the next go around!”

In two 25-23 sets, the Thunder had reached their goal and the North Texas Knights 15 National Royal proved to be no match for the team with the steam. The Thunder rolled to the gold medal with a 25-15, 25-17 win.

The Thunder’s Khalia Lanier was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player and joined teammates Justin Spann and Katie Oleksak on the All-Tournament Team.

Spann says that her team is a great group of young women and players. “They are fun to coach and be around so it has made life for both myself and assistant coach Jami Rolfes very easy. Most importantly, a positive group of supportive parents has made this experience much more enjoyable as well. It’s tough on the parents when they see their daughters challenged, but the parents have been supportive towards their daughters and us as coaches. When you have a support system like that, it makes practices, tournaments and traveling that much more enjoyable! This has been a very rewarding season for the players in the gym as well in preparation in life!”

Storm’s gold medal team will be a force in Junior volleyball going forward. “We consider ourselves a close knit team and it’s obvious we have a great bond!” Spann says. “We have a very bright future together!”



team won the Arizona Region cham- the 15 Open Gold medal home. All would be disappointed with anything challenge. We know that means a lot we’re ready for it!”

number one seed, the North Texas stood between the AZ Storm 15- gold final. The team dug deep, using stacles throughout the season to help

we had a new line-up.” Spann injury or a different player that challenges occasionally but the end

Officials Brace for Changes Ahead

By J.R. Salima

The Officials Division was quite busy last season, and we are looking forward to this coming season, especially all of the new changes in responsibilities, policies and procedures. In behalf of the Division, we express our gratitude to all of the officials who worked very hard to provide a safe and fair environment for all of our members. We had a number of new high school officials join us this past season, and we are taking further steps to recruit more, including more women and college students. We even had a few coaches express interest and we especially welcome more because of their experience and love for the game. Incidentally, we would like to thank all of the coaches who helped officiate matches this past season because of the shortage of officials during tournaments. We also encourage all of the traveling team coaches to take and utilize the R2 position during matches this coming season to enhance their skills in officiating National Qualifiers.

Our Division has undergone a few changes in personnel and in procedure. We first welcome Ernie Vasquez, as our new Junior Clinic Training Specialist, who will be in charge of all live junior training clinics. Two new Team Leaders were appointed to our Officials Division Action Committee (commonly referred to as ODAC): Jordan Ahern-Metro East team and Wade Colson-Metro South team. In addition, we welcome Rick Tate, who will serve as our second At-Large ODAC member. Our mileage reimbursement policy has been re-adjusted and our Officials Division Handbook will now be completely accessible online, through the Region website.

We always seek opportunities for our officials to advance in their ratings, we are proud to announce the following advancements: Landry Homsher-National Referee, Jordan Ahern and Brian Steiner-National Scorers, and Wade Colson – Beach Zonal Referee. Advancements within our Division include: *Provisional to Regional II Referee*-Tiana Beetso, Zina Wood, John Warner, Chris Wagner, Marilyn Dumbrell, Jessica Duckworth, Gil Wartell; *Regional II to Regional I*- Micah Steiner, Melissa Englert, Wade Colson, Scott Anderson; *Regional Scorer*- Scott Anderson, Ryan Feickert, Walter Kadous, Tana Martin, John Ornelas, Elvis Ottley, Bill Rinnemaki, Scott Sloat, Gil Wartell, and Jet Villavicencio. Congratulations to all of our officials for your hard work in the Region!!!

If you heard news about the scoresheet being changed, you are absolutely right. We received word at 2013 Opens in Louisville, KY, that the scoresheet will be changed. This being the first of the season, it is more important than ever that all players and coaches attend a training clinic to learn about the new scoresheet. We will work hard to make sure all junior girls and boys, as well as coaches, get live personal scorer training. Last season, we allowed 'online' VRT modules to be our main clinic training method but we realized nothing takes the place of personalized training, so we will be setting up many junior clinics for our clubs.

On a side note, all officials, players, and coaches are encouraged to utilize the Region Match Comment Form to report incidents of importance. The Division Coordinator will handle reports involving officials. However, reports of misbehavior or unethical conduct by Region members, parents, or spectators, will be handled separately by the Ethics Compliance Officer/Committee. Legible and completed forms are appreciated.

We look forward to another season of great play, great times, and great people. We continue to enjoy a wonderful reputation as a Region because of the commitment, hard work, and dedication of its members.

From behind the whistle...

J.R. Salima

Officials Chair for the AZ Region of USAV



2012-13 Arizona Region of USA Volleyball Champions

Girl's 18 Open Spiral 18's Black	Girl's 16A Club Gila Valley Jrs. 16 Chas	Girl's 12A Club Revolution 12 Premier
Girl's 18 Championship Eclipse 18's	Girls 14 Championship Aspire 14 Black	Boy's 18's AZ Fear 18-1
Girl's 17 Open Revolution 17 Premier	Girl's 14 Club Fusion 14 Black	Boy's 16's Club Red 16-1
Girl's 17 Championship AZVC 17 Black	Girl's 14A Club Club Cactus 14 Mizuno	Boy's 14's Aspire 14 Black
Girl's 16 Open AZ Storm 15 Thunder	Girl's 14AA Club White Mountain 14's	Women's A/AA Finer Points Humble Monkeys
Girl's 16 Championship Central Arizona Jrs. 16-1	Girl's 14AAA Club Arrowhead 14 Serve-Ivors	Women's B/BB Bangers
Girl's 16 Club Starling's South Mountain 16-1	Girl's 12 Club Aspire 12 Black	Men's A/AA I Luv

AZ Region National Tournament Finishes

Girls Junior National Championships

15 Open—	AZ Storm 15 Thunder 1st Place
14 National—	Aspire 14 Black 1st Place
16 Patriot—	Spiral 16 Black 2nd Place
17 National—	Revolution 17 Premier 3rd Place
17 Patriot—	Aspire 17 Black 3rd Place
18 National—	Zona 18-1 5th Place

Boy's Junior National Championships

17 Open—	Club Red 17 5th Place
18 Club—	AZ Fear 18 White 3rd Place APV18 Black 3rd Place

Starlings National Championships

12's—	Tuba City 2nd Place Team AZ Adam 3rd Place Shonto Starlings 4th Place
14's—	Team AZ 14 Nick 1st Place
16's—	Shonto 16s 1st Place South Mountain Legacy 3rd Place Shonto 16-2 4th place
18's—	South Mountain 3rd Place

Volleyball Festival— Phoenix Arizona

12's Division—	EVJ 12 Mizuno 1st Place
13's Division—	EVJ 13 Mizuno 1st Place
14's Division—	EVJ 14 Mizuno 1st Place
15's Division—	Arrowhead 15 SWAT 3rd Place
16's Division—	Revolution 16 Premier 3rd Place
17's Division—	EVJ 17 Mizuno 4th Place
18's Division—	Aspire 18 Black 4th Place

Region Outreach Wants to Reach YOU!

The Outreach of the Arizona Region stayed busy in 2012-13 and reached out to some groups not previously on the Region's radar.

The Parent's as Partners Initiative again only saw a few clubs take advantage of the presentation geared toward parents and coaches coming together to make a better experience for their athletes. Club Fortitude, Northern Arizona Juniors and Club Verrado took advantage of the free program and enjoyed the fruits of their labor all season. James Milacek, a parent from Club Fortitude said, "Thank you once again for your fabulous slide presentation at the Fortitude Volleyball Club meeting last night. I was impressed and inspired, and grateful for my daughter's opportunity to participate in her club program. I also want to thank you for enlightening me as a parent and helping me to participate in my daughter's experience more positively. Thank you once again for your participation in USA Volleyball and in our daughter's Club meeting. The information you offered us last night was so important and appreciated!" To schedule a PaPI presentation, call Region Outreach.

The AzAPHERD convention brings together P.E. teachers from all over AZ and has become a conduit for the Region to help get the game, in it's many forms, into more P.E. classes across the state and help young and/or inexperienced coaches better training ideas and methods. Schools from the Phoenix Elementary School district asked the Region to come in and help and they did doing clinics for both coaches and players at seven of their schools. Coach Nicole at M. Bartlett Heard Elementary gave the Region some feedback, saying, ""Thank you so much for coming to our school and helping the girls out. I saw so much improvement with their serves and passing the ball, I couldn't believe it. I can't wait for our next practice to use those drills that you showed me today. I really like how those drills are ran by the girls so it gives me the chance to coach and walk around to help everyone out."

AzAPHERD also got the Region an invite to the Gallegos Basic Elementary School Family Fitness night in Tucson in March. Teresa Montaro spearheaded the event and wanted a volleyball presence. "I am so happy you were able to attend our special night. Volleyball was a great hit! I need to introduce volleyball with the fourth

graders. The night was very successful, total attendance was 866. That is our second largest turnout. I think adding volleyball to the flyer really brought in more attendees. Thank you so much and I look forward to working with you in the future."

The Region's Outreach worked with the City of Maricopa and the City of Goodyear in coaching and player clinics. The Region also reached out to after school programs in the Deer Valley School district and spent time with the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf doing several days of clinics there. Also included is the YMCA programs which asks the Region for coaching and player clinics a few times a year.

Special events included a coaching clinic at ASU with USAV Director of Sport Development John Kessel and USA Olympic team libero Nicole Davis in September. The Fall League gave dozens of players who did not play for their school teams a chance to hone their skills and keep sharp before club tryouts. The Vulture Peak Challenge went to two weekends to handle the growth and the city of Wickenburg is working with the Region to gather more courts for the 2014 installment. The Sol Survivor tournament was a casualty of scheduling with the Volleyball Festival but will be back in 2014 as a tune up for Festival and Nationals.

The Region continued to grow the beach game as well, putting together both the Arizona Men's and Women's Collegiate Beach Championships. In addition, the Region continues to help grow the only High School sand program in the country, working with the A.I.A to ensure the program's success.

The Region's Outreach department takes pride in the fact that schedule willing, they have never turned down a request for a coaching or player clinic in the three years it has been in existence.

If you are interested as a Club Director in the PaPI program, a City or Rec. program in need of coaching and player clinics, a school or a school district looking to grow the game in your classes or your school teams, contact the Arizona Region's Outreach at :

Outreach@azregionvolleyball.org



Az Junior Beach Caps Great Season by Crowning King and Queen

The Arizona Region finished up it's 11th year with over 340 participants and crowning a King and Queen of the Beach in late July.

Carson Flood and Jenee Henderson played with and against everyone after earning a berth into the season finale with season long excellence and were named the King and Queen of the Beach for 2013.

The season champions had the highest point totals gathered with each finish over the season.

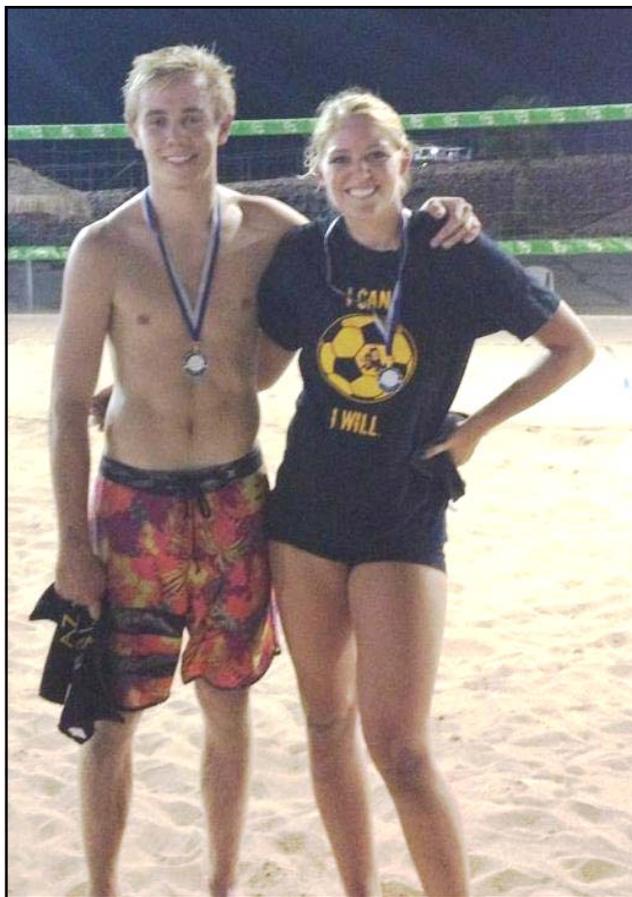
Payton Harmonn won the girl's 12's division while Brooke Nuneviller captured the girl's 14's grouping. Jordan Anderson was the points champion in the girl's 16's division and Claudia Lemieux was the girl's 18 champion.

On the boy's side, Flood and Kamrin Knight tied for the 18's title. Henderson won the Women's Open points championship and Garrett Roberts won the Men's Open title.

A special thanks goes out to Lexi Anderson and Micah Briscoe for their management of the Jr. Beach program all summer. The two did an amazing job and sustained the excellence the program has enjoyed these past 11 years.

Congratulations to all the played and participated and a special thanks to the Parents who braved the heat, the dust and long nights.

Registration will begin in April for the 2014 season.



Arizona at USA Junior Beach Tour Championships in Milwaukee

Congratulations to two teams representing the Arizona Region at the 2013 USAV Junior Beach Championships that took place July 28-29, 2013 at Bradford Beach in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Representing Arizona in the Girls Open 14U were Gabby Leo and Darian Clark. They competed in the 14U division. The Girls Open was for bid winners only.

Representing Arizona in the Girls Open 12U were Jenna Bolena and Mary Shroll. Bolena/Shroll

took first place in the Bronze division which placed them 13th place out of 35 teams in the nation for 12U in Milwaukee. They competed against teams from Texas, Virginia Beach, Illinois, and San Francisco.

Both teams qualified for an invitation at the first stop of the Junior Beach Tour on April 28 (Desert Open in Glendale, AZ). The tour visited 19 states, 19 regions with 28 tournaments throughout the summer. The top three finishes at each tournament in each age group received bids.

Reflecting on a Season Past and What's Ahead

I have had the privilege and opportunity to be a spectator for a lot of volleyball this past club season. As the 2012/2013 USAV/Arizona Region volleyball came to a close, I found myself reflecting on the good and not so good things I saw. Some changes have produced more changes nationally and locally, along with the effect they will play for each of us as USA Volleyball and Arizona Region members alike.

We had the most teams in the Region's 24 year history represent our great state and region at Girls Junior Nationals in Dallas, Tx. We had 3 Open, 12 National, 7 USA, and 11 American division team's for junior girl's, along with 5 boy's teams participating at Boys Junior Nationals in Reno, NV. Our Arizona Region was also represented at High Performance in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Both AZ HP boy's teams and both AZ HP girls teams represented our region well. Finishing up our summer were 6 AZ HP beach teams who showed us beach volleyball in Arizona is alive. Arizona continues to grow stronger and is continually proving to be a top competitor against regions who have owned those national titles for years. It shows our young athletes are becoming more sought after from top schools and many of our athletes' education costs have been covered by scholarships.

The Region supported the proposal from our official's division to allow the officials to assess points to any participant or spectator that is displaying poor and/or unsportsmanlike behavior. We, as parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. got to see the negative effect we can have on our teams in a different light. Unfortunately, due to years of bad behavior, it has cost the Region tournament sites much to the chagrin of younger players continuing on with volleyball, all the way to High Performance teams and college scholarships. If truth be told, the negative action in the end didn't help your daughter and/or daughter's team after all.

A national change that you will see and hear more about starting this 2013/2014 season is USA Volleyball's SafeSport. There is only positive things to come from SafeSport. It will cover bullying to social media to physical and sexual misconduct. As stated in SafeSport's introduction, "Unfortunately, sports, including volleyball, can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including physical and sexual abuse. All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the values of USA Volleyball." The most important item is a safe environment for all student-athlete's. USA Volleyball continues with, "We must recognize that the safety of the student-athlete's lies with all those involved in the sport and is not the sole responsibility of any one person at the club, regional or national level." To be a participating club in the Arizona Region, each club will have to abide by the requirements of SafeSport. To become better acquainted with this new program, please see SafeSport.org.

In the end, we have to ask ourselves what is most important? Is it who won or lost or about creating an environment for young athletes that fosters growth and development in a positive atmosphere rather than producing the best winning team. I recently read an article written from Doug Shank, a club director and coach which I personally thought summed up what we as coaches, club director's, parents and spectators need to remind ourselves; "Can winning and development co-exist? The answer is most certainly yes, but in order to do that we must keep things in perspective and understand that these are just children, not professional athletes whose primary objective is results. Chances are pretty good that if we foster a positive, learning environment for each child and focus on their growth and development with the game, results will quickly follow."

Respectfully,

Charlotte Pottle

Junior Division Coordinator

Aspire 12's Adds Region Title to So Cal Crown

Usually winning a Region tournament early in the season is cause for celebration and confidence but for Karen Gray's Aspire 12- Black team, it backfired.

"Winning a Region tournament early on gave the team some false confidence." Gray said. "When we dropped a whole division in the second tournament the team realized that they would have to roll up their sleeves and work hard to be a great team. We found that sometimes our best players would have a tough match, but it didn't have to mean that we would lose the game or the whole match; they would have to pick up as a team and fight even harder. At times the pressure is crazy, but they seem to thrive on it."

The Aspire 12 Black team used that ability to handle pressure and turned it into a Regional Championship in the 12's Club division beating a scrappy AZ Storm 12 Thunder team in the finals.

Gray thinks her squad is of championship caliber is because of their work and focus. "WE are not a big team and our previous volleyball experience ranged from zero to several years so we had a real mix of players. They really worked hard on their game all season, so when they were behind they didn't freak out they just continued to play their game as a team. Winning the American Division of the So Cal Qualifier gave them a lot of confidence - we did things there we have never done before in a match like

running 1's and serving to positions, so it was a real breakthrough tournament for them. We had a lot of fun all season and they are an amazing group of girls to coach."

The day of Regionals, Coach Gray warned the team that it would be a lot like the So Cal Qualifier; every team they played would get harder. "The atmosphere was exciting because we would hear of upsets and crazy matches that were going on at the other tournament locations and it energized us. When we got to our final two matches they both went to **three games.**"

"The girls know that you can beat a team easily in the first game and then lose by the same score the next, but we were patient and prepared to play it one point at a time. They were focused and fearless and our serving and blocking really pick-up in the last two matches. We were able to win the finals in the third game 15-10!"

Gray says that only 4 of her athletes will be able to still play for her next year in 12's as the rest will move on to a 13's team. "I am confident that a few of the players will be among the best at their positions in the state when they reach high-school and possibly college." She says applauding. "I hope that they all continue to grow and develop including their love of the game. The future is up to them, but I am confident all of the girls will remember their 2013 club season."

AZ Programs Named AVCA All Academic Teams

The American Volleyball Coaches Association announced their 2013 Team Academic Awards and several Arizona programs were recognized.

Teams must have a cumulative 3.3 grade point average or higher in order to qualify.

In the High School boy's category, Ironwood Ridge in Tucson, under the direction of coach Bill Lang was the only Arizona boy's team to win the award. In High School girls, Lang won again for his Ironwood Ridge squad. Joining him was Hamilton High School under the direction of coach Sharon Vanis, Prescott High School led by coach Shellie Bowman, Rincon High School in Tucson under the tutelage of coach Nic Thitgis and coach Jamie Gordon's team at Verrado High School in Surprise.

Arizona State University was the only Division I college program from Arizona to win the honor. The Sun Devils are coached by Jason Watson.

In the NJCAA Div. II category, Scottsdale Community College under the direction of Regina Mannix also won the team award.

Congratulations to these programs and their coaches.



Region Acts of Kindness

While the Region gets caught up in the daily competition of club v. club and team v. team, it's good to know that there are people out there who put character ahead of the nonsense.

Take, for example, Pete and Kelly Woods. They were out at Spiral's facility and found two volleyballs. They picked them up and made the effort to bring them home on the northwest side. They went to the region website, found that the Arrowhead club director was close to their residence and contacted her to get them to the rightful owners. One ball belonged to an Arrowhead player and one was from another club. It was something they could have kept or given to the team they were there to watch, but instead took a few minutes to see the balls get to the rightful owners. It may seem like a small gesture but the Region was impressed with their kindness, knowing some parent was fretting over having to buy another volleyball for their daughter.

Tina Nation, from Flagstaff, sent this e mail to the Region. "On Saturday, my daughter's team, VOS Flagstaff 16s, played in Phoenix. We ended the day playing the second to last match of the evening, knowing that we would have referee duty for the final match. As I'm sure you know, the weather was crummy and most of the team was traveling back to Flag that night. Club View 16's apparently figured out that we had a very long night still ahead of us and graciously offered to cover our scoring and ref duty, so we could head home. We thanked them, of course, but want the whole organization to know what a thoughtful gesture that was and how appreciated it is. What great sportsmanship!"

If you know of people in our Region who should be given some props for going beyond the call, let us know. We'd like to let them know we appreciate them and their efforts to help make our sport better. You can contact the Region at Outreach@azregionvolleyball.org.



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The Arizona Storm 15 Thunder won the 2013 15U Open Junior National Championship in Dallas on July 4th with a straight set win in the finals. In addition, Khalia Lanier (left) was voted the MVP of the tournament. It is the first time a team from AZ has won an Open division championship at Junior Nationals. Thanks to the team and coaches for representing AZ in such a golden way!