

2024-25 Parent/ Athlete Manual



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INTRODUCTION

The following manual is designed to introduce athletes and parents to the principles about the mission, core values, goals and policies of Wicked Northeast, and to clearly define coach, athlete and parent responsibilities during the season. It may seem daunting at first, but we have found the more information given up front, the fewer issues down the road. This is our attempt to orient athletes, parents, and coaches to the standards for our volleyball program. We hope this handbook will address any questions you have about our club and will serve as a useful guide for getting the most out of the club volleyball experience.

Wicked Northeast serves the Downeast and Midcoast regions of Maine and we never forget our roots. We want to reach every athlete that loves volleyball and provide them with an opportunity to continue to develop their love for the game. Our goal is to teach athletes in a positive, technical, and game-like manner. We want our athletes to want to come to practice. We will strive to make our practices fun and enjoyable. Please note that does not mean they will be easy; easy and fun are not synonymous. We have found that, over time, as the level of play elevates there is a direct translation to the amount of enjoyment gained. As a program, we assume the following about FUN:

1. Playing volleyball is FUN.
2. Improving is FUN.
3. Competing is FUN.

Organized sports offer a different kind of fun than hanging out a friend's house or messing around on the volleyball court. We hope that our athletes experience an intrinsic reward simply from playing such a great game. We will enjoy watching the athletes improve, the team improve, and even the coaches improve. We will enjoy competing regardless of the outcome, and we hope this will be satisfying for both athletes and fans. We will not eschew values for winning.

We will focus hard on fundamentals and building proper motor skills. This is extremely critical, and we will be very detail-oriented when it comes to this. That said, we know athletes have other coaches either at the high school level or future coaches at the collegiate level. We will not spend a lot of time trying to fix what is not broken. But where we can, we will help simplify and show athletes ways to improve all of their motor skills. Volleyball is also a team sport, and a heavy emphasis will be placed on teamwork and cooperation. We have seen how this translates to success on and off the court. We will utilize games that have as close a translation to the game of volleyball as possible. We have found that the best hitting game is pass, set, hit. The best passing game is pass, set, hit. The best defensive game is pass, set, hit. Well, you get the picture.

WICKED NORTHEAST VOLLEYBALL CLUB

CLUB LEADERSHIP

Alyvia McIntyre, Director

After completing a 12-year competitive volleyball career, with the last 4 years at Husson University, I am excited to take on the role of Director at Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club. Growing up in California's Bay Area, I have been involved with club volleyball for eight years as a player and three years as a coach at the 12s, 14s, and 16s levels. My previous experience includes five years coaching technical volleyball to teams and individual athletes through private training; to this I add a minor in coaching from Husson. Classically trained as a setter and libero, I have experience coaching all positions. My coaching philosophy centers around building strong volleyball players with sound fundamentals and great court vision while also fostering a love for the game. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with my dogs and studying to receive my doctorate in physical therapy at Husson University!

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Britannia Balyint, Assistant Director

This is my 4th year involved with club volleyball and I am excited to be back and working with Wicked. I have been a volleyball parent for the last four years as well as an assistant coach for the latter two with the 16s and 17s Gold teams. This will also be my third year in an administrative position. Previously, I was the head coach at Bay Ridge Elementary School for six seasons, for grades 6-8. My experience comes from four years of high school play and learning alongside high school and club coaches willing to train me. With the right mindset and work ethic a player can achieve more than they think, and I look forward to helping all players amplify their abilities and love of the game.

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Corey Papadopoli, Administrator

This is my 14th year involved with club volleyball and I am excited to be back and working with Wicked. I coached 18's for 7 years and 14's for 6. and acted in an administrative or Director role with another club for 8 years. Previously, I was the head coach at MDI for 11 seasons, 10 as varsity coach, and spent a year as varsity coach at Ellsworth prior to MDI. My experience comes from four years of high school play and four years of collegiate play, at a nationally ranked Division III NCAA program. Trained originally as a setter, I can play and coach every position on the court. I am a firm believer in sound fundamentals and that there are no small things.

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PART I: PLAYING FOR WICKED NORTHEAST

MISSION STATEMENT

At Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club, our mission is to foster a passionate community of athletes dedicated to the sport of volleyball. Through comprehensive coaching, teamwork, and sportsmanship, we strive to develop both the athletic skills and personal character of our athletes. By promoting a culture of inclusivity, respect, and continuous improvement, we aim to empower each member to reach their full potential on and off the court. Together, we pursue excellence in volleyball while building lifelong friendships and memories and a love of the sport.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be recognized as a premier volleyball club where aspiring athletes of all ages and skill levels come to develop their talents and passion for the sport. We envision a dynamic environment that inspires growth, teamwork, and excellence in volleyball, guided by top-tier coaching and a commitment to fostering both individual skill mastery and team cohesion. Our vision is to cultivate a community where every member, from beginners to elite competitors, experiences the joy of playing volleyball while making lifelong friendships and achieving personal and group successes.

WICKED NORTHEAST VOLLEYBALL CLUB

EXPECTATIONS OF THE ATHLETES

ATTITUDE:

Stay positive and focus on the present moment. Be open-minded! Be respectful of *all* individuals: coaches, officials, teammates, parents, etc. Be respectful of the equipment and facilities in which we play. The athlete represents Wicked Northeast, the community, and coaches, and most of all themselves.

EFFORT:

Push yourself to places that you have never been before; test your limits. Our coaches will give this sport all they can. We ask that the athletes do the same. You only get out what you put in.

DISCIPLINE:

Do what has to be done every time. We expect athletes to always do their best, whether in practice or in a game.

INTENSITY:

Always give 100% while being in control and attentive both physically and mentally. How you practice relates directly to how you perform in games. Practice hard, play hard.

PROMPTNESS:

Being early is being on time. If practice starts at 5 pm, we expect the athletes to be dressed, shoes on, water bottles filled, pre-practice activities complete and ready to practice at 4:45 pm. We have very little time to practice, and tardiness only serves to reduce this time.

LANGUAGE:

Keep it clean at all practices and games; no swearing. Be respectful.

ATTENDANCE:

If an athlete cannot make a practice, please notify your coach at least 24 hours in advance so that they can adjust their practice plan. It takes a long time to plan practice and missing practice without proper notice not only wastes the coaches' time, but also affects the quality of practice. The entire team is affected. That said, emergencies happen, and we recognize that some things are unforeseen.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARENTS

OPEN COMMUNICATION:

If you have a question, please do not hesitate to speak with the coach. If there is a concern regarding playing time, please see our section on Conflict Resolution.

SPORTSMANSHIP:

This program respects the time and effort of all involved, including referees, opponents, and opposing coaches. There will be calls you do not agree with. In a number of cases those calls will be made by athletes from other teams. This is part of the game. If there is a glaring problem with an individual, we will address it. Please remember that you are role models for your athlete. Please lead by example. Let the coaches coach, let the athletes play, let the refs ref.

SUPPORT:

Support your athlete's effort, commitment, and sacrifice. Support their investment in the process and dedication to the team more than their volleyball accomplishments. Celebrate the effort and contributions of every athlete, at all levels. Find ways to serve by helping when needed (team activities, transportation, team dinners, etc.). Studies show that what athletes want most from their parents is to hear these words: "I am so proud of you." And, "I love to watch you play." Studies also show that a athlete's most dreaded time with their sports parent is the car ride home and the coaching that comes with it. Our coaches will provide them with plenty of feed-forward – trust them to do the coaching. *Your child's success or lack of success in sports does not indicate what kind of parent you are. But having an athlete that is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient, and one who tries their best IS a direct reflection of your parenting.*

EXPECTATIONS OF THE COACHES

We are committed to providing the highest quality programs we can. We will ask no less of our coaches than we ask of the athletes.

INTEGRITY:

Coaches will act with strong ethical behavior, thus presenting themselves as positive role models. They will be fair, honest, and respectful of all participants. They will maintain positive attitudes.

DISCIPLINE:

They will maintain discipline in a firm, friendly, and consistent manner. They will treat athletes with respect and concern, placing the welfare of the athlete above winning. They will not compromise values to win.

PREPARATION:

They will prepare practice plans ahead of time, based on the results of the previous practice and the goals for the season. They will not take this lightly and will put a lot of thought and time into this process.

Keep in mind that volleyball is an imperfect game, played, coached, and officiated by imperfect people. We trust that everyone is giving their best effort to succeed, but mistakes will be made! We are process-oriented, not result-oriented. We want to encourage the athletes to do things the right way, not just to score points. Mistakes will be made along the way, but it is the only way to ensure that they develop their full potential as athletes and future leaders. Therefore, we expect that even when we miss a serve, hit a ball out of bounds, or an official blows an “obvious” call, we give our best effort to remain positive. Applaud the effort not the result.

All parents, athletes, and coaches are representatives of the Wicked Northeast Volleyball Program. Our every word and action reflect upon the club, your athlete, and this team. Please choose to represent us well!

Our coaches will strive to demonstrate their commitment by building positive relationships with their athletes, by taking an interest in their lives outside of volleyball, and by being organized and prepared for every practice and every game. They will be committed to their athletes to the extent that we expect them to commit to our program.

If you have any questions or concerns as the season progresses, please don't hesitate to contact us. We would ask that any conversation about the program be conducted respectfully, and at the appropriate time. Our preference is to first communicate with the athlete directly on how to best improve their skills. If you do have questions about what we do, or why we make certain volleyball decisions, we would be more than willing to discuss our reasoning. Please remember that the coach's responsibility is to make decisions that are best for the team. If there is a concern about playing time, please see the section on Conflict Resolution for the best way to approach that.

WICKED NORTHEAST VOLLEYBALL CLUB

TRYOUTS

Selection Process – Elite Teams

Elite tryouts will take place ahead of Local tryouts. Any athlete not making an Elite team may try out for a Local team. Selection to a Wicked Northeast Elite team will be based upon the following criteria:

- Athlete performance during tryouts, including skill level, effort, competitiveness, and interaction with other athletes.
- Athletic potential, and how a athlete may develop over the course of a season.
- Attitude and coachability of the athlete.
- Position played.

Selection Process – Local Teams

All athletes that try out for a Local team will be placed. These athletes will be placed based on position and travel arrangements. We try and accommodate athletes whenever possible when they commute together. If you need special accommodation with another athlete, please let us know before the end of tryouts so that we can place them accordingly. Our practice times are set based on the projected teams available and we cannot always accommodate a practice time request but will do our best. Again, please notify us in advance of the end of tryouts if that is the case.

Notification and Commitments

Wicked Volleyball will contact all athletes that make a team within 24 hours of the last day of tryouts. The parents will be asked to verbally commit to the team. This will be followed by a written offer via email. A parent must reply and accept the offer via email.

Financial Commitment

A athlete family that commits to play for Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club is making a financial commitment to pay the full tuition in a timely manner. Wicked Northeast tuition can be paid in-full at registration or spread out via a payment plan. If you choose to pay via payment plan, the first payment will be due upon acceptance and the following payments will be due in regular intervals that will be outlined when you pay.

If trying out for an Elite team, the first tuition payment will not be made until after the tryout process upon making a team and accepting that position.

Response time

We allow athlete families 48 hours to respond to a written offer. We would like to remind parents that if they plan to decline our offer to please do so as quickly as possible so we can offer the opportunity to another athlete.

Waiting List – Elite Teams

After the first round of offers is made to those trying out for Elite teams, all remaining athletes are placed on a waiting list. Please know that in past seasons, many athletes on our waiting list received offers. We will do our best to keep everyone in the age group informed of their status and will send an email once all the team positions are filled.

WICKED NORTHEAST VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Time Commitment

Wicked Northeast encourages our athletes to be involved in school activities and understands the value of participation in high school sports. We will do our best to accommodate the reasonable demands of other sports and school activities. Academics should always be the priority of our athletes, but we expect Wicked Sunday practices and tournaments to take priority over other sports during the club season. Athletes who have conflicts with other sports should discuss this with their coaches as soon as possible. Before trying out, athletes and parents should discuss whether the athlete can make the necessary time commitment to the club and their team. Our Local Teams offer a more flexible schedule for our multi-sport athletes.

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GIRLS' TEAMS

All teams will consist of 10-14 athletes and 1-2 coaches. We carry this number to make practices more effective, because we have multi-sport athletes there is always the possibility of injuries throughout the season, and to promote healthy competition within the team. **Elite** teams will carry 12 athletes maximum. **Local** teams will carry no more than 13-14 athletes.

Local Teams

We do not cut for Local Teams. All athletes that try out for local teams will be placed. The primary purpose of our Local teams is to develop the athlete's skills to the greatest extent possible before they go back to their high school teams or move on to college. Local teams will play 3-4 events and all tournaments will be in the State of Maine. We will endeavor to organize tournaments against other clubs within the state for the greatest variety of competition possible. With these teams the emphasis will be placed on athlete development and playing time in tournaments will be handled differently than for Elite teams. Please see the Playing Time section.

Elite Teams

Elite Teams typically play 3-4 events. This consists entirely of multi-day tournaments. Multi-day events will require overnight stay. We will place teams at the most competitive level we can. Because tournament registration takes place prior to team selection, we will make our best guess as to the skill level of the team based on the previous year's teams. We recognize that this is an imperfect process and may result in a team being placed at a higher level than their skill supports. That said, our goal is to provide the best competition we can for these teams and facing higher level teams promotes teamwork and forces one to deal with adversity. We need to play better teams to get better.

BOYS' TEAMS

This year will see the first boys' club team in this part of the state. We will create one team that will be an 18U team open to all boys in 9th – 12th grades. The team will have a maximum of 12 athletes and we will cut if necessary. We may, at the Club's discretion, accept practice players in addition to the 12 travel athletes that would practice only – no tournament participation. This will be a Regional team and participate in NERVA tournaments.

Regional Teams

We may cut for Regional Teams. We will accept the most skilled athletes for these teams. Regional teams will play 3-4 events and all tournaments will be in New England Region. These tournaments will be one-day events taking place on Saturdays throughout the season.

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TEAM PRACTICES

Local Team Schedule

Local Teams practice once a week on Sundays. The exception to this is Easter weekend when practice will take place the Saturday before Easter. All tournaments will take place on Sundays. Team practices are 2 hours in length, and may consist of group skills practices with other teams, team-specific practice, or a joint-practice and scrimmage with another Wicked team. All practices will take place at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School unless rescheduled due to a facility conflict.

Coaches may require teams to meet earlier than the practice time if they are working on mental toughness or Brain Training. If so, this will be communicated ahead of time.

Regional Team Schedule

Regional Teams practice once a week on Sundays. The exception to this is Easter weekend when practice will take place the Saturday before Easter. All tournaments will take place on Saturdays. Team practices are 2 hours in length, and may consist of group skills practices, team-specific practice, or a joint-practice and scrimmage with another Wicked team. All practices will take place at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School unless rescheduled due to a facility conflict.

Coaches may require teams to meet earlier than the practice time if they are working on mental toughness or Brain Training. If so, this will be communicated ahead of time.

Elite Team Schedule

Elite Teams practice 2 days a week: Sundays and one additional day as provided on the schedule. While weekday practices are optional, as we recognize that athletes may play other sports, Sunday practices are mandatory and should not be missed unless there are extenuating circumstances. If so, this should be communicated with the coach ahead of time, if possible.

Team practices are 2 hours in length on Sundays and may be 1.5-2 hours during the week. In addition, a 1-hour conditioning practice will be coordinated with the Sunday practices. All Elite Teams will practice at the same time. This is to ensure consistent instruction and most practices will have combined activities for all teams as well as individual team workouts. All practices, including weekday practices, will take place at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School unless rescheduled due to a facility conflict.

Canceled Practices

Some practices may be canceled due to weather conditions or facility scheduling conflicts. While Wicked Northeast will do its best to make up a canceled practice, this may not always be possible. If a practice is canceled, we will post it on our Facebook page and through Athlete First.

TOURNAMENTS

Wicked Northeast girls' teams typically will compete in 3-4 events during the regular season, which begins in January and ends in late April. Tentative team schedules will be posted on the Wicked Northeast website prior to tryouts, but these schedules are subject to change depending on tournament availability and other scheduling issues. Athletes who accept a position on a Wicked Northeast team are making a commitment to attend all tournaments.

Local Tournaments

A local tournament is defined as a tournament within a three-hour drive of the practice facility. Local tournaments do not require a hotel stay, although some families may choose to stay in a nearby hotel the night before a competition. No travel arrangements will be made by Wicked staff for local tournaments.

Regional Tournaments

A regional tournament is defined as a NERVA-sanctioned one-day tournament within the New England Region. Regional tournaments do not necessarily require a hotel stay, although some families may choose to stay in a nearby hotel the night before a competition. No travel arrangements will be made by Wicked staff for regional tournaments.

Elite Tournaments

Elite tournaments will typically be multi-day events and therefore require a hotel stay. Where a tournament is stay-to-play as JVC tournaments typically are, hotel blocks will be made for our team. Please see the Hotel section under Club Policies.

Canceled Tournaments

While we do our best to adhere to the planned tournament schedule, unforeseen events may lead to a tournament cancellation or a team not being accepted to play. In the event a tournament is canceled for any reason, Wicked Northeast will attempt to replace the tournament with a similar event. However, it is not always possible to find an alternative tournament, and if that is the case refunds will be given for canceled events. Wicked Northeast is not responsible for athlete costs or hotel costs related to canceled tournaments.

PART II: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TEAM RULES

We have one basic team rule: **Do not let your teammates down.** The following are examples of this and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Letting your teammates down may result in removal from practice and/or loss in playing time.

Be On Time: Arrive at least 15 minutes early to practice, ready to go, so that you are ready to start at the time practice is scheduled to begin. Notify your coach in advance if you will be late or miss a practice.
Tardiness causes disruption and can result in loss of playing time.

Work Hard: **Always do your best.** You are expected to work hard every day. Set a goal and work to achieve it. Your coaches will help you set goals and create a plan to fulfill them.
A lack of effort can result in removal from practice or loss of playing time (see “playing time” below).

Sportsmanship: You are expected to be a good teammate. Act responsibly and be respectful of your teammates. Be respectful towards coaches, other teams, and parents.
We place particular emphasis on anti-bullying. You are expected to support your teammates on and off the court. Any evidence of bullying may result in suspension from the team. This includes online bullying using social media.
Acting inappropriately by yelling at others, blaming others, or causing arguments can result in removal from practice or loss of playing time.

Be Accountable: **Take responsibility** for your actions and emotions on and off the court. You are the only one that has control over these things; stay positive in your interactions with others.

Playing Time: Everyone will get equal practice time. See Playing Time sections for more information on these topics.

Jewelry: **Jewelry may be worn during practices or games, excepting “extremely long necklaces” or “large hoop earrings.”**

Cell Phones: There will be absolutely NO TEXTING or cell phone use without prior permission during practice hours or games.

CLUB POLICIES

Conditioning:

It is a huge advantage for athletes to be conditioned coming into the start of the season. Because our practice time is limited and primarily focused on skills development, we will not devote a huge amount of time to conditioning at practice for **Local Teams**, other than to try and keep drills fast-paced. We ask that the athletes condition on their own time as well. We will provide some guidelines for conditioning specific to volleyball.

For **Elite Teams**, weekly conditioning practices will be provided and take place on Sundays. Conditioning will not make athletes better volleyball athletes, but it will allow them to improve their skill level by increasing range of motion, improving physical attributes (i.e., vertical jump, speed, agility), and reducing likelihood of injury.

Injuries:

Athletes know their own body best. They should communicate with their coach if they sense any problems. We are concerned with the welfare of our athletes. If a athlete is unable to practice due to an injury, has come out of a game due to an injury, or sustained a head injury, they must have a note from their doctor that approves their return.

Tournaments:

Please see our Tournament and Travel Policy sections for more information.

Uniforms:

Uniform sizing will take place during tryouts. Athletes will order uniforms online. All athletes are responsible for providing their own uniforms. These will be available through Wicked Northeast and purchased online. We do not have extras and they cannot play in a tournament without a uniform. **Local Teams** will be provided with one Wicked Northeast jersey; they can wear shorts/spandex of their choice. **Elite Teams** will receive two jersey of alternating colors and two pairs of shorts/spandex.

Team Parents:

All teams, Local and Elite, will be looking for 1-2 parents to act as Team Parents for the duration of the season. The role of the Team Parent typically includes: helping with travel arrangements and ensuring all athletes have a ride, organizing teambuilding events, and other related activities. They will work closely with the coach and take initiative, communicating with the coach and parents.

TOURNAMENT POLICY

Wicked Northeast teams attend tournaments to compete. Everything else is secondary. While we know many athletes' families travel with their athletes and schedule vacation time around the tournament schedule, we ask that parents support their athlete's goal to compete at the highest level. This means that sightseeing, socializing, and visiting family members should be saved for the end of a tournament and should not interfere with a athlete's focus during the tournament. The following rules apply to help athletes maintain maximum focus during team competition.

Local Team Tournaments will all take place in Maine. If athletes are old enough to drive (and licensed) they may drive themselves to these tournaments.

All **Regional** tournaments will be one-day tournaments in New England. We recognize that the costs can be prohibitive for this and encourage carpooling and room sharing. All athletes must be accompanied by a parent, but again, it does not need to be their own. We are looking for a team parent or parents that is/are willing to help coordinate travel and lodging arrangements. If you are interested, please let us know.

All **Elite** tournaments will be multi-day tournaments out of state. We recognize that the costs can be prohibitive for this and encourage carpooling and room sharing. All athletes must be accompanied by a parent, but again, it does not need to be their own. Most tournaments will have recommended hotels and we will provide this information once we have it. Otherwise, we are looking for a team parent or parents that is/are willing to help coordinate travel and lodging arrangements. If you are interested, please let us know.

Preparedness

- Athletes should arrive on time for all tournaments and scheduled warm-ups and matches. Athletes that are late to a tournament, warm-ups, or a match could lose playing time at the discretion of the coach.
- Athletes commit to getting enough sleep prior to the tournament and to maintaining proper nutrition before and during the tournament.
- Athletes must bring their full uniform including all jerseys to every tournament. Failure to do so could result in a loss of playing time.
- Athletes should line up backpacks neatly on the court or in the camping area.
- Athletes should have adequate amounts of water with them at tournaments to be able to stay properly hydrated during matches.
- As with practices, on time for Wicked athletes is 15 minutes early and ready to play.

Attitude + Behavior

- Athletes and Parents are representing the club, their coach, their teammates/athletes, and themselves at a tournament and are committing to behaving in a respectful manner toward tournament officials, coaches, teammates/athletes, parents, and their opponents.
- Cell phones are to be put away during warmups, competition, and work duties. Athletes who violate this policy will sit out the next set. No exceptions.
- Camp areas are to be kept neat.

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- Athletes and parents should never argue with officials. This includes athlete line judges and scorekeepers. Disputes over scores should be handled by athletes and coaches only, and parents should not shout or intervene in any way.
- Parents are not allowed to approach a coach about issues of playing time, position or other disputes during a tournament. Please see the Conflict Resolution section of this handbook where we elaborate more on this point.
- All athletes are required to help with the line judging, scorekeeping, score flipping, and down officiating. USAV offers free online training for R1, R2, line judging, and scorekeeping roles. All athletes should complete all modules prior to the start of the first tournament and expect to perform all duties at some point during the season. No headsets or cell phones are to be used during officiating assignments. This also means absolutely no cell phones at the scorekeeper's table. Anyone that does not adhere to work assignments could be penalized at the discretion of the coach.

Team Togetherness

- Athletes should always stay with their team during a tournament. This means athletes will spend time together in between matches whenever possible.
- Athletes should do their best to stay focused on the task at hand. Spend your downtime with your teammates and please save socializing for after play has ended for the day.
- Athletes should always show respect for their teammates on and off the court.
- Team Events are essential to success and mandatory. Team parents should consult with the group to plan a reasonable number of affordable team activities at a tournament, and athletes are required to attend once a team activity has been arranged and agreed upon by a majority of the group. Athletes who skip team events risk playing time penalties.
- Athletes, whenever possible, should spend their downtime supporting other Wicked Northeast teams competing in the venue.

TRAVEL POLICY

Transportation:

For out-of-state tournaments (**Elite** and **Regional Teams**), the athletes must be accompanied by a parent, though not necessarily their own. This is an insurance issue and there are no exceptions. We are looking for parent volunteers to drive multiple athletes to tournaments.

Hotels (Elite):

It is essential that our parents pay attention to emails about travel and hotel bookings to meet deadlines. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they have booked hotels in a timely fashion to attend tournaments.

When committing to a Wicked Elite team, parents are also committing to comply with our hotel policy. Parents will be asked to secure rooms using a personal credit card. All hotel costs related to tournaments are paid for by athlete families and are not included in season tuition.

OUR PRIMARY MODE OF CONTACTING YOU ABOUT HOTELS AND TRAVEL IS VIA EMAIL. IF YOU KNOW YOUR TEAM IS ATTENDING A TOURNAMENT THAT REQUIRES A HOTEL STAY, PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL FREQUENTLY.

Our Administrator works to secure Team Hotels for our Wicked teams and coaches. We are issued what is called a Hotel Block which is a certain number of rooms within a hotel at a designated rate. Wicked reserves one room per team member in the Hotel Block should your family require additional rooms they must be secured directly from the hotel and may not be at the same team rate.

All JVC travel events are considered Stay-to-Play events. These events require that registered teams book their hotel rooms in the hotels the event provides. Failure to book at their hotels can result in a team's expulsion from the tournament. When we request Hotel Blocks for these travel tournaments, we must take the blocks that the event operator provides. There are many factors that go into how they issue these blocks. We make every effort to put our families in hotels that are clean, well run and close to the venue. We cannot always control those factors. We ask that you be understanding as we are always trying to make your travel experience as enjoyable as possible. Families are required to stay in the Team Hotel and comply with the hotel policies of our tournaments even if more desirable rooms might be available at another hotel. **Different families may stay together as long as the 5-room minimum is met.**

Please note that athletes are required to book a room in the designated Team Hotel and within the specific Hotel Block we were provided with for the event. Failure to stay in the Team Hotel will result in the athlete being suspended for the tournament.

Hotels (Regional):

Hotels will not be required or mandatory for Regional teams. Hotel stays are not included in season tuition and Wicked Northeast will not provide hotel coordination.

PLAYING TIME

When you and your athlete make a commitment to play for Wicked Northeast, we make a commitment to you and the athlete. We will focus on the whole athlete, helping them develop their skills through quality coaching, intensive practice, and tournament competition. Through the course of the season the athletes will learn to deal with adversity, develop mental toughness, and learn about leadership. The primary vehicle for this development is practice. You are paying for practice time. The athletes will spend more time in practice than at tournaments. They will likely contact the ball more times in one practice than at all their tournaments combined. This is not to diminish the value of tournament competition but rather highlight the importance of practice. Practice is where we get better.

That said, playing time is perhaps the biggest issue we encounter throughout the season. You all want your athletes to play all the time. Most of them may want this as well. If we took only 6 or 7 athletes per team, we could make that happen, but we put ourselves at risk hoping that no one will get sick or injured. Additionally, practice time would suffer. To practice volleyball effectively, we need to be able to play six on six every practice. The obvious countereffect of this is less playing time for all. But if our goal is to put the team first, then this is what we need to do to make the team the best that it can be. So that leads to the next question: How do we determine playing time?

Local Teams

At the **LOCAL** level, everyone will play at every tournament. While equal playing time cannot be guaranteed, meaningful playing time is assured for all athletes. The only thing that could prevent this is violation of team rules. If that is the case, the coach will address it with the athlete ahead of time. Should a team make playoffs or the Gold bracket, they may opt to play a more competitive lineup based on the team's play throughout the day. If they end up in a consolation bracket, we encourage an equal opportunity mindset.

Elite Teams

At the **ELITE** level everyone will play at every tournament, but playing time will not be equal. It must be earned, and it is earned in practice. Volleyball is a team sport. It requires teamwork, good communication, and cooperation for a team to be successful. To that end, coaches will put the best 6/7 team athletes on the court. A athlete with more skill than another may be detrimental to the team if they possess a negative attitude or unwillingness to make an effort in a game. We are looking for those that work hard, show a good attitude, and demonstrate a high level of skill at their position. Never will we eschew values for winning. We will place a heavy emphasis on practice time and hold our athletes to a higher standard than win/loss record. We want to be doing things the right way every time. Perfection in the effort, not the result, is our aim.

So how are starters determined? Your coach will speak with athletes and parents at the start of the season and explain their methodology for determining playing time. Should a team be knocked out of contention on the last day of a tournament, we encourage an equal opportunity mindset.

Parents and Playing Time

The support of parents is essential to an individual athlete and the success of their team. We ask our parents to maintain a positive attitude and encourage their athlete to stay confident and positive, whether he/she is a starting athlete who receives significant playing time or a substitute who plays fewer rotations. Coaches and the club leadership are the ultimate authority about team

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lineups and playing time decisions. Under no circumstances is a parent to discuss lineups or playing time with coaches whether at a tournament, at practice or by email or text. A parent who wants to discuss playtime decisions should follow the steps outlined in the Conflict Resolution Policy.

Playtime Violations of the Conflict Resolution Policy

Approaching a coach at a tournament to air a complaint is a serious violation of club policy. A parent who tries to talk to a coach or club leadership about an issue of playing time or position will be reminded to follow the Conflict Resolution Policy. A second infraction will result in lost practice and/or tournament playing time for the athlete. At the discretion of club leadership, parents who approach a coach may be asked to leave the tournament and subject to suspension from practice and future events. A second violation will result in a more severe penalty, including possible athlete expulsion from the club.

Constructive Communication

We recognize that sometimes a parent may feel angry or frustrated and be tempted to vent their feelings. We also know that at times a parent may have a legitimate concern that needs to be aired. We ask both our coaches and our parents to always maintain perspective and self-control, complying with our 24-hour rule and our conflict resolution policy (see Conflict Resolution Policy).

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COMMUNICATION

Communication is a core value of Wicked Northeast. We believe strong communication is the cornerstone of a strong program. Many problems and misunderstandings can be avoided when the club and coaches communicate clearly with parents and athletes.

Website

Our website www.wickednevolleyball.com is your best resource for keeping up with everything happening in our club. Our website is used to celebrate your athlete's accomplishments and to keep everyone updated on news and information related to tournament schedules and practices. You will also find club policies, club contact information, coach information, team schedules, and rosters on our website.

Social Media

Please follow us on Facebook (@WickedNortheastVolleyballClub) and Instagram (@WickedNortheastVolleyball Club) for the latest updates from our club. See further information in our Social Media Policy.

Emails

Email is the primary form of club communication so please check your email regularly for important updates. If you do not see emails from our club, please check and make sure we have your correct address. When filling out your registration or other forms PLEASE take care to input your correct email address. Careless typos mean we will not have your contact information. And be sure to check your Spam folder!

Cell Phones, Text Messaging & Athlete First App

We understand that athletes often communicate best by text messaging, however we have implemented the use of the Athlete First App for athlete/coach communication. We are asking all our coaches, athletes, and parents to use this as the primary means of team communication throughout the season. See the Social Media Policy for more information regarding texting.

Parent Communications

We encourage parents to email the Director with questions about club business. You are also welcome to contact coaches by email or text message about issues of logistics or scheduling. However, please refer to our Conflict Resolution Policy in this manual for guidance on how to communicate about issues related to your child's performance or playing time.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Wicked Northeast recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our student-athletes use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

General Content

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities and it is recommended to include the parents/guardians. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Volleyball Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use.
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language, sexual activity.
- The adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems.
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.
- Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with athletes is **Transparent, Accessible, and Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. The communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, another coach or parent should be included in the communication so there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choice, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If the communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely the method and manner of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

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Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, and Similar Sites

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from any athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM methods.

The club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “like” or “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

Twitter

Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

Texting

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 10pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

Email

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent/guardian must be copied.

Electronic Imagery

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state, or national publications, used in club videos, posted on club or club associated websites or social media, or offered to the club families seasonally on disc or other electronic form. It is the default policy of Wicked Northeast to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the club.

Request to Discontinue all Electronic Communications

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communications. Immediate compliance without repercussion must be granted.

Misconduct

Because social media and electronic communications can be used to commit misconduct (e.g. emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing), such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our SafeSport Handbook.

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Violations

Violations of the Club's Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy should be reported to your immediate supervisor, a Club administrator, or the Regional SafeSport Contact for evaluation of complaints and allegations. A USA Volleyball participant or parent of a participant who violates this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to: suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

REFUND POLICY

Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club offers all-inclusive fees that provide the necessary funds for each team to compete for the entire season. Fees are determined based on several factors, including, among other things: the level of the team, the uniform and apparel package, number and type of tournaments, and amount of on-the-court practice time. The fees also include funds to pay the fixed costs to run the Club, including: facility costs, facility and club insurance, equipment, USA Volleyball and other registrations and sanction fees, payments for team coaching, coaches training and certifications, staff salaries, administrative expenses, technology and webservices fees, taxes, and other business expenses.

When you accept an offer to participate, you accept the financial obligations for the entire club fee for that season. No refunds, partial or full, will be made to players who choose not to participate at any point after acceptance of the club contract.

Prorated refunds may be considered at the discretion of the Club due to the cancellation of a season as a result of a government mandate and/or actions of applicable volleyball sanctioning associations, such as the NERVA Region and USA Volleyball. Refund amounts due to the cancellation of a season will be estimated based upon an approximation of unused non-fixed costs associated with, and refunds received by the club as a result of, the cancellation of the season that are directly associated with the player and their team. Prorated refunds may consider the number of team practices and tournaments cancelled.

Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club reserves the right to waive this Refund Policy at its sole discretion at any time. Such waiver shall generally be in response to extenuating or highly unusual circumstances, and in no event shall the Club be obligated to waive this Refund Policy. Examples of this may include:

1. Player is injured during the course of the club season and will no longer be able to participate or complete the club season. Wicked Northeast will retain monies for services already rendered and return any monies paid for future services.
2. Player due to illness must miss an extended portion of the club season, unable to participate in practices or tournaments. Wicked Northeast will retain monies for services already rendered and return any monies paid for future services.

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RELEASE POLICY

If an athlete/family decides to depart Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club during the respective season, the following steps must take place:

Release Policy:

STEP 1 - The athlete/family in question must submit a written request for release to the Club Director by email and to the NERVA Region at commissioner@nevolleyball.org stating the reason for the request.

STEP 2 – Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club will release the athlete immediately once the following item(s) have been completed:

1. Athlete returns all club gear provided to the athlete this season.
2. Member must remit all financial obligations agreed upon contractually. Payment Option – Member pays full cost of season.

Transfer Policy: A player can represent only one club during the Season. A change in the geographical location of the family due to a change in job, military, scholastic or inner-collegiate status may receive special consideration. No player may participate in different Qualifying events with different clubs/teams. Proof of residency must be provided by the family at the time of the release/transfer request.

Once an athlete has participated in a National Qualifier Event (Regional or NQ) they may not be released for the rest of the season to another club. Please refer to the USA Volleyball (USAV) Championship Manual on releases for athletes that participate in regional or national qualifying/bid events.

Parent Name (Print)

Parent Signature

Date

PART III: CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

While our club and team policies are outlined in this document, we know that from time to time, some concerns may arise. Our conflict resolution policy provides parents, athletes, and coaches with a constructive forum for resolving questions and concerns. We offer the following guidelines to assist in resolving areas of concern.

Reminders:

Parents are always asked to adhere to the “24 hour rule” and wait at least 24-hours after the final play of a tournament before raising any concerns. Violation of the 24-hour rule may result in a negative ramification for the parent or athlete.

We always encourage athletes to talk to their coaches about their role on the team or anything that they may be struggling with during the season. However, any larger issues where a parent needs to get involved are to be handled in the following way:

Step 1: Parent Communicates to the Director:

We request that if as a parent you have concerns or issues about your athlete that you reach out to the Director via the email provided at the beginning of this document and request a phone call or meeting. Please include your team’s name and the athletes’ name and the Director will contact you. There is no need to spell out your issue in the email; the Director will hear you out when you connect.

Step 2: Director Communicates to the Coach:

Once you have your conversation or meeting with the Director, they will communicate the issue or concern to the coach. The Director will listen to the coach’s perspective and try to facilitate a solution to the issue. The Director will then follow up with the parent and present the proposed solution.

Step 3: Parent, Coach & Director Meeting:

If further action is required, we will then schedule a meeting with the Parent, Coach, and Director to work together to resolve any issues.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club was founded by coaches, parents, and former college athletes with the intent of reaching Downeast and Midcoast Maine athletes. Our goal is to help these athletes reach their full potential so when they go back to their middle schools, high schools, or move on to college, they are in a better place than when they first came to us. We will develop their volleyball and leadership skills so that they can not only give back to their teams but to their communities as well. We do not want to be their final coaches and hope they all continue playing as long as they can and maybe, one day, become coaches themselves.

After reading this manual, please download and sign the **Athlete-Parent Contract** from our website. The athlete and parent/guardian(s) should digitally sign the document and email it back to their coach stating that you have read the manual and agree to abide by the Club's rules and policies.

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ATHLETE-PARENT CONTRACT

Parents and Players must sign this agreement that they have read the Parent/Athlete Manual and agree to the policies therein, sign and REMIT SIGNATURE PAGE ONLY prior to the date of the first team practice.

Our goal is an incident-free, positive season for all. Our experience has told us that the best way for us to accomplish this is to put down in writing our exact expectations up front. This Manual covers the majority of questions/concerns that may arise during the season and provides a means to handle these. It is imperative you read this Manual and agree to all terms prior to joining this season.

THIS CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT (the "Contract") is made and entered into, by and between WICKED NORTHEAST VOLLEYBALL CLUB, doing business in and around Ellsworth, Maine and below Named Parent and Athlete, as participant in the Wicked Northeast Volleyball Club, a member of the NERVA Region, an affiliate member of USAV.

Player's Name: _____

USAV Age Group: _____ Team Assignment: _____

Father/Guardian 1's Printed Name Father/Guardian 1's Signature Date Signed

Mother/Guardian 2's Printed Name Mother/Guardian 2's Signature Date Signed

Athlete's Printed Name Athlete's Signature Date Signed